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Temporomandibular disorder (TMD)

Temporomandibular disorder (TMD) is a condition affecting the movement of the jaw. It's not usually serious and generally gets better on its own.

Check if you have temporomandibular disorder (TMD)

Signs of TMD include:

- pain around your jaw, ear and temple
- clicking, popping or grinding noises when you move your jaw
- a headache around your temples
- difficulty opening your mouth fully
- your jaw locking when you open your mouth

The pain may be worse when chewing and when you feel stressed.

TMD can also stop you getting a good night's sleep.

How to ease temporomandibular disorder (TMD) yourself

There are some simple things you can do to try to reduce your jaw pain.

Do

- ✓ eat soft food, like pasta, omelettes and soup
- ✓ take paracetamol ([Link: www.nhs.uk/medicines/paracetamol-for-adults/](http://www.nhs.uk/medicines/paracetamol-for-adults/)) or ibuprofen ([Link: www.nhs.uk/medicines/ibuprofen-for-adults/](http://www.nhs.uk/medicines/ibuprofen-for-adults/))
- ✓ hold ice packs or heat packs to the jaw, whichever feels better
- ✓ massage the painful jaw muscles
- ✓ try to find ways to relax

Don't

- ✗ do not chew gum or pen tops
- ✗ do not bite food with your front teeth
- ✗ do not yawn too wide
- ✗ do not bite your nails
- ✗ do not clench your teeth – apart from when eating, your teeth should be apart
- ✗ do not rest your chin on your hand

▼ [How to make your own ice packs and heat packs](#)

Try either:

- a pack of frozen peas, wrapped in a tea towel, for no more than 5 minutes at a time, or
- a hot water bottle, wrapped in a tea towel, twice a day for 15 to 20 minutes

See a GP if:

- you're unable to eat or drink
- the pain is affecting your daily life
- the pain is affecting your sleep
- the pain and discomfort keep coming back

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: how to contact a GP

It's still important to get help from a GP if you need it. To contact your GP surgery:

- visit their website
- use the NHS App (Link: www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/)
- call them

Find out about using the NHS during COVID-19 (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/using-the-nhs-and-other-health-services/)

Treatments for temporomandibular disorder (TMD) from a GP

The GP may suggest:

- stronger painkillers
- relaxation techniques to reduce stress
- ways to improve your sleep

They might suggest you see:

- a dentist – if teeth grinding might be an issue
- a psychologist – if stress and anxiety are making your pain worse
- a physiotherapist – for advice about jaw exercises and massage

If these treatments do not help, you may be referred to a specialist in joint problems to discuss other options, such as painkilling injections or surgery.

Causes of temporomandibular disorder (TMD)

TMD can be caused by:

- teeth grinding (Link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/teeth-grinding/)
- wear and tear of the joint
- a blow to the head or face
- stress
- an uneven bite