



OCCLUSAL STABILIZATION SPLINT INFORMATION

Commonly called a 'bite splint', an occlusal stabilization splint is a smooth hard plastic overlay placed on the biting surface of the upper or lower teeth of patients who exhibit signs and symptoms of moderate to severe clenching and grinding. An occlusal splint is carefully designed to protect the teeth and the jaw joint (TMJ). Appropriately used, an occlusal splint may reduce or delay the chance that patients will require much more extensive treatment like multiple crowns, root canals, or jaw joint surgery.

An Occlusal stabilization splint helps patients in several ways:

1. Splints help periodontal patients. Properly constructed splints decrease the rate, frequency, and force of night time clenching and grinding. This is important for patients with loss of tooth support.
2. Splints help TMJ patients. In addition to reducing night time clenching and grinding, splints centers the bite anatomically, therefore decreasing the damage that wide forceful movements cause, especially during sleep. Properly constructed splints temporarily correct bite problems that cause jaw joint (TMJ) torque or dislocation. This is important for patients with damage to their jaw joint.
3. Splints help patients with weak or cracked teeth. Splints protect weak or cracked teeth from bearing forceful pressure that could cause damage or fracture.
4. Splints protect patients who grind very forcefully and have signs of damage and wear to their existing teeth.
5. Splints help patients protect expensive dental work. This is especially true of patients who have elected to have beautiful smile reconstructions or all porcelain bonded restorations. Since studies show that nocturnal grinding is episodic and few patients are actually aware of their sleep time grinding habits, a splint makes sense for someone who wishes to protect extensive dental work.

The purpose of an occlusal stabilization splint is not to eliminate the symptoms caused by anatomical bite problems or severe clenching. The purpose is to attempt to slow the rate of damage and to reduce the chance you will need more complicated treatment like multiple crowns, root canals, or jaw surgery.

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