

General Instructions for Jaw Problems

The following are some general instructions for you to follow, in order to avoid pain, restriction, or aggravation of your jaw, as well as other associated symptoms, such as headaches.

- 1. Lips together, teeth apart.** Much of jaw pain and tension is brought about by resting the teeth together (or worse—clenching the teeth). Most people with this habit are totally unaware of it. The only time our teeth should touch is momentarily when we swallow. After we swallow, our jaw should relax and our teeth should separate slightly. It is very difficult to break clenching habits. However, keeping your teeth slightly apart will probably do the most to reduce your symptoms. Simply ask yourself once an hour “Where are my teeth right now?”
- 2. Avoid any unnecessary use of your jaw.** Try to rest your jaw as much as possible. This means that you should avoid activities such as chewing gum, singing extensively, playing wind instruments, biting hard objects like pencils, or eating hard chewy candy. Excessive talking should also be avoided.
- 3. Avoid hard, tough foods.** We want you to eat “normal” foods. However, please avoid hard, chewy foods such as tough breads (bagels, hard rolls) or tough meats (chicken, fish, or hamburger are OK). Also avoid whole raw carrots.
- 4. Avoid sleeping on your jaw.** It is especially important to avoid stomach-sleeping or sleeping on your side with your hand under your jaw. If you have to sleep on your side, avoid sleeping on the side in which you are having the most jaw symptoms. It is best to sleep on your back for optimum jaw and neck health.
- 5. Avoid stressful activities.** Avoid the following: over-opening when yawning (use your hand under your chin when you feel a yawn coming on), resting your chin on your hand, pushing on your jaw to “pop” your neck, or making a habit of repeatedly popping your jaw. For the period you are in treatment with us, it is also important to avoid activities which put you at risk for jaw injury. This includes contact sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball, or competitive skiing.
- 6. Get adequate rest.** Studies have shown that if we are deprived of adequate sound sleep our muscles will become fatigued, sore, or painful. Muscles can only recuperate during the deepest stages of sleep. More than 90% of the general population require 8 hours of sound sleep in order to avoid muscle symptoms.
- 7. Tongue in the roof of the mouth.** It is important to keep your tongue in the roof of your mouth, with the tip of the tongue resting on the gums behind your upper front teeth. This will also aid in keeping your teeth apart, and will help reduce clenching habits.

Following these instructions will not eliminate clicking or other noises in the jaw joints. However, you will have less jaw fatigue, restriction, or pain. It is unlikely that any type of jaw treatment will be successful unless you follow all of these instructions, as well as the specific instructions given to you by Dr. Guinn.

The following is our handout for patients who demonstrate active bone loss in their jaw joints:

It has been determined that you have degeneration in your jaw joint. To reduce inflammation and the risk of additional bone loss, I am recommending that you take the following supplements each day. These products are available without a prescription.

Take all supplements listed below **twice a day**, with breakfast and after dinner:

Glucosamine 750 mg

Calcium and Magnesium approximately 500 mg and 250 mg respectively (you can get these formulated in the same tablet)

Fish Oil Capsule

The fish oil capsule should contain a minimum of each of the following:

Fish oil	1000 mg
Omega 3 fatty acids:	
EPA	180 mg
DHA	120 mg

Vitamin D 500 IU (or 1000 IU once a day)

When looking at dosages on labels, do not assume that the dose listed is for one tablet. Carefully read how many tablets you need to take in order to get the appropriate amount for each dose. For example, Glucosamine is often labeled as 1500 mg, but you have to take two tablets to get this amount. Therefore, you would take one tablet in the morning and one at night.

You will find that glucosamine is often formulated with other products, such as chondroitin sulfate or MSM. While these other products may be helpful for you, they do not have the proven research that glucosamine does.

Do not take glucosamine if you are allergic to shellfish. Some individuals are sensitive to sulfates. The most common form of glucosamine is glucosamine sulfate. You can obtain glucosamine hydrochloride (hcl). However, there is some empirical evidence that the sulfate form of glucosamine is more effective. Do not take calcium or magnesium if you have a history of kidney stones or kidney disease. If you experience a "fish" taste after taking these, put the fish oil capsules in the freezer.

If you experience stomach upset when taking these supplements, make sure you take them after a meal. If this does not help, discontinue the calcium/magnesium tablet. If you still experience stomach upset, try a "sustained-release" form of glucosamine that regulates the release in the stomach. Glucosamine is also available in liquid form, which generally causes no side-effects.

Information on how these products can help you, and brands that have been independently tested, may be found at: www.consumerlab.com