

# Tinnitus SA

## Jaw disorder and tinnitus

### Temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ)

- Do you have pain in and around the jaw?
- Do you often get headaches for no apparent reason?
- Do you have difficulty opening and closing your mouth?
- Do you experience clicking or grating when you open or close your mouth?
- Does your jaw sometimes lock?
- Have you ever had pain in a perfectly healthy tooth?
- Do you clench and grind your teeth at night?
- Do you have sore or tired jaws when you wake up in the morning?
- Do you have pressure behind your eyes or tearing for no apparent reason?
- Do you experience sinus pain?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you may have a TMJ disorder.

### What is TMJ disorder?

TMJ disorder refers to disorders of the jaw joint, or the Temporo-Mandibular Joint. The term may also be used to refer to the muscles and soft tissues around the joint area.

The jaw joint is at the side of your face, just in front of your ear and can be felt moving as you open and close your mouth. It is one of the body's most anatomically complex joints. There can be a relationship between jaw and neck problems.

Other names for the condition are MPD (Myofascial Pain Dysfunction) or CMD (Cranio-Mandibular Disorder). TMJ disorder can cause pain deep in the ear and may aggravate tinnitus.

### Causes of TMJ disorders

**Predisposing factors:** past health or development, e.g. born with a jaw malformation, had an early accident or blow to the head, been a thumb-sucker

**Precipitating factors:** an unusual event which sets off your TMJ disorder, e.g. direct blow to the face, chin or jaw, whiplash or other indirect trauma; surgical or dental trauma

**Perpetuating factors:** faulty habits which prolong the existence of the problem, e.g. chewing gum, clenching the jaw, grinding the teeth at night, abnormal muscle habits, posture stress or tension.

### About Tinnitus SA

Tinnitus SA is a web based tinnitus information service designed to provide awareness, factsheets and information about management options for people with tinnitus and health professionals alike. Tinnitus SA services are provided by non-profit South Australian Audiology business Can:Do Hearing on behalf of the South Australian Government.

[tinnitussa.com.au](http://tinnitussa.com.au)



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Lightens the load

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### Treatment for TMJ disorders

In almost all cases pain can be alleviated and the problems can be managed effectively. Because it is a chronic condition, changes in lifestyle and habits are necessary to obtain good sustainable results from treatment.

Some people have to learn to live with some inconvenience, e.g. a click or occasional discomfort, especially if there is joint damage. You can learn ways to minimise these inconveniences. In a very few cases, surgery is a viable option. As a rule, the longer you avoid treating the problems the longer it takes to get better,

Treatment is best shared between your Dentist (or Dental Specialist) and a therapist who is trained in TMJ and is able to assist you with long-term management. There are also self-help guides available which help to alleviate some of the problems by managing associated behaviours.

#### Treatments can include:

**Physiotherapy:** freeing stiff or restricted movement, massage for myofascial release, treatment of related factors such as spinal or biomechanical disorders, headache, posture and movement disorders

**Gentle yoga or Tai Chi:** provides relaxation, mobilizes stiff joints and improves posture

**Relaxation training:** progressive relaxation training or meditation

**Dental Splint:** a removable plastic bite-plate that fits over either the upper or lower teeth to help break the habit of clenching and encouraging normal jaw movement.

*Acknowl. R O Uppgaard "Taking Control of TMJ"; Lynn Haysmann, Physio Plus*

#### More information

Book: "Taking Control of TMJ" Robert Uppgaard, Dentist  
<http://www.amazon.com/Taking-Control-TMJ-Temporomandibular-Fibromyalgia/dp/1572241268>



**Can:Do Hearing**

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