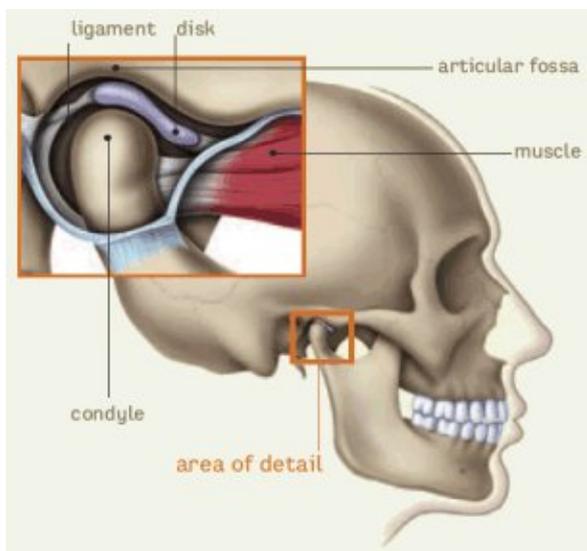


Definition:

The jaw is one of the most frequently used joints in the body, allowing us to talk, chew, yawn, swallow and sneeze. Problems of the jaw are common. Many are caused or made worse by overuse and misuse of this joint and it's muscles.

By following simple advice your symptoms can go entirely or settle and be made more comfortable.



Things to avoid include:

- ✦ Clenching or grinding your teeth, which is common with concentrating, being at work, being cold or even stressed or annoyed
- ✦ Chewing pencils, nails, lips, gum or holding things in your mouth
- ✦ Faulty movements of the jaw and any clicking, clunking or popping in the joint associated with pain



- ✦ Poor postures – i.e. chin poked forwards. Avoid resting your head in your hands and cradling a telephone between your head and shoulder
- ✦ Taking large mouthfuls or bites of food and eating hard or chewy food eg, apples, nuts, toffee or crusty bread
- ✦ Stress is a very common contributing factor to disorders of the jaw
- ✦ Yawning on full stretch
- ✦ Long dental appointments



Self - Care information:

Positioning the best position for your jaw is with your teeth slightly apart but lips together. Placing your tongue on the roof of your mouth, behind your top teeth, helps with this, this is called the 'no' position.

Also, try to breathe in and out through your nose (this is easier when your lips are together).

Yawning, make sure your mouth is in the 'no' position. Use your hands to restrict or block excessive or painful movement, when your jaw opens.

Posture try to improve this, as reviewed and advised by your physiotherapist, especially when sitting for long periods of time.

At night, sleeping on your side and/or tucking your chin in towards your chest can help.

Diet modification eat a diet of softer, more manageable foods.

Try cutting up your food into smaller, bite size pieces or even grating foods e.g. carrots.



Chew with your back teeth and try to chew evenly in your mouth.

Ice cube massage can be used over the areas of discomfort for 3-5 minutes at a time.



Heat use a washcloth soaked in warm water or a commercial heat pack over the area of pain for 5-10 minutes, a hot drink inside the mouth can also assist if the joint or muscles are tight, stiff or in spasm.

Relaxation where possible, giving yourself 15 minutes a day to relax or meditate, especially if you feel that stress aggravates your jaw problem.

Concentrate on your breathing at this time.

Dental appliance if you have been provided with a mouth splint or night splint by your dentist, this may help to alleviate your pain, especially if you have a tendency to grind your teeth at night

Finger massage gently over and around the areas of discomfort inside and out of your mouth for 5-10 minutes at most

