

HYGIENE SERIES

# Bruxism

Bruxism is the clenching or grinding of the teeth that often occurs while a person is sleeping. The symptoms of bruxism are:

- A sore, tired jaw
- Difficulty in opening and closing your mouth
- Sensitive teeth
- Earaches or pain in your jaw joint

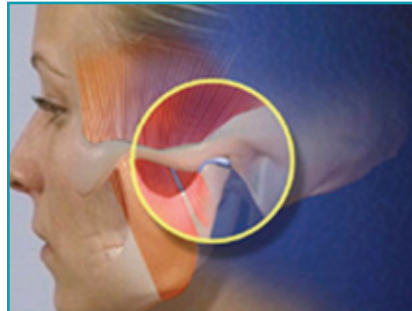
## Bruxism can cause other dental problems

When you brux, the force on your teeth is many times greater than during normal chewing. These forces can cause:

- Flattened or worn-down teeth
- Teeth chipped at the gumline
- Loose teeth
- Damage to the bone around your teeth
- Damage to your jaw joint



*Worn teeth due to bruxism*



*The jaw joint*



*A nightguard*

## Treating bruxism

No matter what is causing your bruxism, it's important to treat it early on to prevent damage and restore harmony to your mouth.

Though all of the causes of bruxism are not known, stress is often a factor. If this is the case, a variety of stress reduction techniques may be recommended. We may also recommend medication to temporarily reduce stress and relieve pain.

Sometimes, spaces between the teeth, worn teeth, or teeth that are out of alignment may cause bruxism. Crowns, bridges, or other dental restorations can restore your bite and eliminate grinding and clenching.

A common and effective treatment for stopping the damage caused by bruxism is the use of a nightguard. A nightguard is a plastic device that fits over your top or bottom teeth and protects them from the damage caused by grinding. A custom nightguard, made from models of your teeth, usually offers the best protection.