

Tooth Grinding / Bruxism

More information on the signs of tooth grinding and how you can treat the problem



Tooth grinding is a common problem and not everyone that grinds realises that they do it. Here are just a few of the signs that you might be grinding your teeth

- Headaches in the morning when you waken up or at certain times of the day
- Migraines that resist traditional medication
- Stiffness or aching in the jaws when eating chewy foods
- Flattening of the points on your eye teeth
- flattening chipping or rough edges appearing on the front teeth
- multiple and repeated breakages of back teeth where there is no tooth decay
- persistent sensitivity
- notches on some teeth just above gum level
- Jaw popping or clicking

So what is happening

We believe that when you are sleeping the chewing muscles fire up and pull the teeth firmly together and then slide the jaw a long way from side to side. Grinding or Bruxism as it is known by dentists often occurs at the more extreme ranges of movement of your jaw leading to unusual wear patterns on the teeth. What's more the muscles over time become stronger and more toned so you can grind with greater intensity and do more damage! In people with severe grinding problems you can actually see the jaw muscles bulge when they clench together, more commonly though the clenching / chewing muscles will be tender when we press on key areas.

Can it be treated?

Studies suggest that those of us that grind will always have a tendency to do so. Quite often we do this more at times of high stress or when we are very busy. We can however prevent the grinding from causing damage with a range of treatments called bite splints or bite guards. It is much better to work hard to prevent the damage that grinding causes in the first place rather than waiting and trying to repair the damage to the teeth later.

What is a bite splint

A bite splint or bite guard is a device that is worn over some of the teeth that will prevent you from grinding. There are many designs and forms that this can take from the simple to the complex. Some bite guards cover

just 2-4 teeth and others cover all of the upper or lower teeth. After a full examination our team are able to discuss with you which bite guards might be most appropriate for your situation.

How do they work

The most simple bite guards simply get in the way so that you wear away the soft material of the guard rather than your teeth, these tend to be lower cost and fast/ simple solution to the problem. For many patients this is all that is needed deal with the situation. For more intensive tooth grinders more advanced splints or guards can be made that actually use your body's feedback mechanisms to switch of the clenching or grinding muscles.

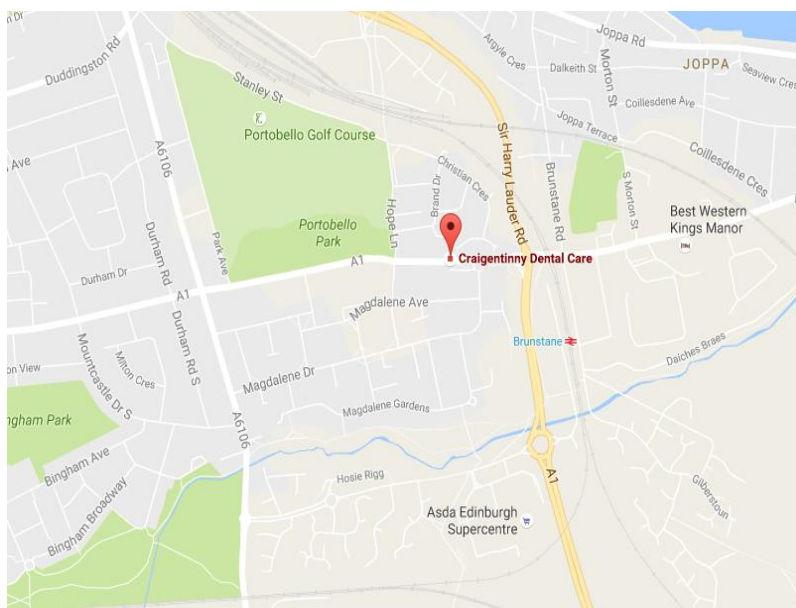
Are they hard to get used to?

The first couple of nights are usually the hardest. With something new in your mouth your body will make more saliva but this rapidly sorts its self out after a couple of days. Assuming the bite guard is made to address a problem that you are experiencing most patients cope very well. Once the initial symptoms have resolved it does take a little discipline to continue wearing.

Some bite guards can be worn intermittently and others need to be worn almost every night. Again only your dentist can advise on your own situation.

Concerned about your tooth grinding?

Why not pop in for a free, no obligation chat with one of our experienced dentists who will be able to give you an idea of what treatment for your Bruxism / tooth grinding would involve. Simply call our friendly reception team on 0131 669 2114 or visit our web site at www.craigentinny.co.uk



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