

Temporomandibular Disorders

What are temporomandibular disorders?

Temporomandibular (TEM-puh-roh-man-DIB-yoo-ler) disorders (also called TMDs) affect the jaw and the muscles you use to chew and open your mouth. They are sometimes incorrectly called TMJ, but this refers to only the jaw joint.

What causes them?

TMDs can be caused by an injury to the jaw, head, or neck. Grinding or clenching the teeth, arthritis in the jaw joint, jaw dislocation or fracture, an abnormal bite pattern, or other things that put stress on the jaw joint can cause TMDs. Certain conditions, such as arthritis, can also cause them. Depression, anxiety, and chronic pain may be related to TMDs.

What are the symptoms?

The most common symptom is pain around the jaw joint, especially when opening or closing the mouth. It is usually felt on only one side. Other symptoms can include neck and shoulder pain, headache, limited jaw motion, and popping or clicking sounds when chewing or opening the mouth.

Talk to your doctor if you think you might have a TMD. They will ask about your medical and dental history, and examine your jaw, head, and neck. X-rays are usually not needed.

How are they treated?

Keeping your jaw relaxed and avoiding excessive jaw movement (such as chewing gum) are the first things to try. Your doctor might prescribe medicines to reduce swelling or relax your muscles. If these don't help, you might need to see an oral surgeon. They may give you a mouth guard to keep you from grinding your teeth at night. Most people do not need surgery.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

MedicineNet

https://www.medicinenet.com/temporomandibular_joint_syndrome_tmj/article.htm

MedlinePlus

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/temporomandibularjointdysfunction.html>

The TMJ Association

<https://www.TMJ.org>

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