

**North Canyon Dentistry**  
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**Occlusal Splints for Temporomandibular Disorders (TMD),  
Bruxism or Clenching**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of splint therapy is to allow your lower and upper jaw to come together without tooth contact and to reduce muscle pain. Many situations cause the malfunction of your lower jaw. Examples are accidents, surgery, developmental defects, peculiar oral habits, naturally occurring malocclusion (poor bite), orthodontics, stress, clenching or bruxing (grinding teeth,) and other conditions.
2. **Rationale for Splint Use:** You will receive a plastic bite splint (occlusal guard). This treatment has been used for many years to keep the teeth from contacting during chewing and to allow the lower jaw to return to a comfortable hinge position without interference and guidance from the teeth. When a splint has been worn for a few days the jaw functions freely.

3. **Wearing Splint:**

**Temporomandibular Disorders (TMD):** If your condition is TMJ, you should wear the splint at all times including while eating, unless directed otherwise. If you remove the splint to eat, your treatment will not be as effective. Many fillings placed in your mouth over the years or other conditions have caused your teeth to meet in a position your jaws cannot tolerate. The splint eliminates tooth-to-tooth contact. Your symptoms will gradually disappear while you are wearing the splint; and your natural teeth, bridges and/or fillings will be adjusted to your new bite by us. This procedure is called occlusal equilibration. After equilibration, you will wear your splint only at night. After a period of time, you may not have to wear it at all. The described treatment usually requires a few weeks to several months.

**Bruxism and Clenching:** If your condition is bruxism (grinding of teeth) or clenching, you should wear your splint at night when you cannot control your jaw movements or during time of stress.

**Cleaning your splint:** It is important that you keep your appliance clean to maintain its longevity. On removal, rinse and brush with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste. You can also soak the appliance in a commercial denture cleaner, but not more than 20 minutes once a week. Store your appliance dry in the container provided especially if you have a dog; they find these wonderful to chew on.