

Mississauga Dental Specialists

Braces Invisalign Teeth Gums & Implants

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Bruxism

Bruxism refers to an oral parafunctional activity that occurs in many human beings. Grinding of the teeth and clenching of the jaw are the two main characteristics of this condition, which can occur during the day or at night.

Bruxism is one of the most commonly known stress related sleep disorders. Bruxism is frequently misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all, because it is only one of several potential causes of tooth wear. Only a trained professional can tell the difference between bruxing wear and wear caused by overly aggressive brushing, acidic soft drinks, and abrasive foods.

Clenching of the teeth is a more common yet less noticeable condition and often occurs involuntarily. Both clenching and grinding of the teeth puts undue strain on the muscles and the temporomandibular joints. Symptoms that accompany bruxism could include stress, anxiety, earache, depression, headaches and pain in the facial area.

Reasons for the treatment of bruxism:

- **Tooth Wear and Occlusal Trauma** – The abnormal wear patterns on the occlusal (chewing) surfaces can lead to fractures in the teeth, which may require restorative treatment.
- **Myofascial Pain** – Pain in the facial region that is not attributed to any organic cause is often related to chronic bruxism. This can lead to debilitating headaches and muscle pain in the myofascial region.
- **Gum Recession** – Bruxism is one of contributing causes of gum recession. It damages the soft tissue directly and leads to loose teeth and deep pockets, where bacteria can colonize and destroy the supporting bone.
- **Arthritis** – In severe and chronic cases, bruxism can be a contributing factor in enhancing the symptoms of arthritis in the temporomandibular (TMJ) joints

Treatment options for bruxism

There is no single cure for bruxism, though a variety of helpful devices and tools are available. An acrylic mouth guard can be designed from tooth impressions to minimize the abrasive action of tooth surfaces during normal sleep. Mouthguards should be worn on a long-term basis to help to stabilize the occlusion as well as prevent damage to teeth and to the temporomandibular joint.

Other methods of treatment include relaxation exercises, stress management education, and bio-feedback mechanisms. When the bruxing is under control, there are a variety of dental procedures such as crowns, gum grafts, and crown lengthening that can restore a pleasant aesthetic appearance to the smile.

If you have questions or concerns about bruxism, please contact our office.