



Tooth Talk

THE NIGHTLY GRIND

If you wake up in the morning with a sore jaw and a stiff neck, you may be doing what 80 to 90% of Canadians have done at some point in their lives – grinding your teeth in your sleep. Bruxism – the technical term – can go undetected for years because most grinders are completely unaware of their habit (it's only audible in 20% of cases) and because its damaging effects on the teeth, jaw and jaw muscles happen so gradually. Women, especially, are notorious nightly grinders.

Each bruxing session lasts from a few seconds to a few minutes at a time and usually occurs at 90-minute intervals during the night. The effects are almost always felt in the morning, after a night of clenching: a sore jaw, stiff clicking sounds in the jaw, the results are more visible and the front teeth begin translucent at the edges. After years of bruxing, fillings start to break to look flat, chipped and By this point, as much as has been worn away come sensitive to temperature, pressure and other stimuli)



Dr. Brian Friedman, a Toronto dentist who is himself a bruxer, says stress is the No. 1 reason for the nightly grind. The greater the stress, the harder and more frequent the bruxing. It can also be caused by a less than ideal occlusion (the relationship between the upper and lower teeth when the jaw is shut), or triggered by certain medications.

The treatment for chronic bruxing is the same regardless of the cause: bruxers are advised to wear a customized acrylic nightguard while they sleep. The nightguard helps protect the teeth and prevent muscle and joint pain. The ideal nightguard, says Friedman, is completely flat, made of hard acrylic and has been adjusted to your bite. "(some) Soft acrylic nightguards or ones that have been improperly fitted do little to protect the jaw and jaw muscles."

Once a bruxer, always a bruxer? Not necessarily, says Friedman. Some people are lifelong grinders, while others only brux at certain times in their lives – the night before an exam or an important meeting, for example. [It is now well known that **stress and anxiety play the major role** in causing bruxism. If you suffer from bruxism try to more effectively manage the stress in your life. By carefully monitoring and controlling the stress you can often **dramatically reduce** bruxism.] If you suspect you're a grinder, make an appointment with your dentist to determine whether it's serious enough to need treatment.

- Jennifer Foster ("Homemaker's", October 1999)

Bruxism in Children

Tooth grinding is often seen in children. Children grind their teeth in response to the pain and discomfort of other ailments such as a colds or ear infections. Commonly, children grind their teeth to relieve the discomfort of allergies. Usually bruxism in children is a passing phenomena which they grow out of with no adverse effects to their teeth.

From the Dentist . . .

The summer is coming to a close and that means summer vacations are over. For some the onset of fall means the stresses of starting school, a new job, relocating, and starting new relationships.

It seems appropriate then that I include a couple of articles in this issue that talk about the relationship between stress, your teeth and jaws.

May I offer the congratulations of our office to several of our patients for the special occasions that have transpired for them over the summer months. Best wishes to: **Joe Naito** on his retirement from the architectural profession. **Karen and Randy Ellis, Jolleen and Dwayne Taylor** on their marriages. Happy 35th anniversary to **Pat and Gord Osborne**. Happy birthday to **Dorthea Bristow, Mildred Carruthers** (happy birthday Nanny!), **Albert Lang, Carl Olajos, Karl Raethe, Sieglinde Scholl, Myrtle Vezina, Gertrude Trigger, Lena Hordowick, Carl Kaiser, Doreen Pitura, Gerhard Poschwatta, Sophie Seidel, Ernie Smeland, Lillian Stephen and Sheila Paynter**. A special congrats to Sheila for the celebration of her many years of community service, in the Westside, with the inception of Sheila Paynter Appreciation Day – July 2!

Congratulations to our young cavity free stars **Sebastian and Patrick Pfnur, Ashley Drouillard, Tyler Goettling**. Keep up the great work !!

I would also like to mention that we now have TOOTH DIAMONDS and TOOTH TATTOOS available for those individuals interested in sprucing up their smiles for a short time. Ask us about them at your next visit.

Look for us to be on the Internet soon. We'll inform you of the launch of our practice website. If you would like a copy of this newsletter sent to your personal email so you can enjoy this publication in all its colour and glory, let us know your address and we'll forward each issue to you.

Have a great end to your summer and start to your fall !

Stress Reduction

We all feel stress at one time or another. Stress is simply the body's reaction to perceived threats or harmful stimuli. In response, the body increases heart rate, increases blood pressure, and releases a host of cytokines and other chemicals.

While stress is meant to be a protective mechanism, in today's society, we often experience so much stress that it can become dangerous to our health. Uncontrolled stress can cause severe medical problems including migraines, high blood pressure, heart disease, and gastric/intestinal disorders. Not surprisingly, stress has been implicated as the major factor in causing bruxism.

Find out how stressed you are, and what you can do about it, with this quick test and tips.

STRESS TEST

1. Do you worry about the future?
2. Do you sometimes have trouble falling asleep?
3. Do you often reach for a cigarette, a drink, or a tranquilizer in order to reduce tension?
4. Do you become irritated over basically insignificant matters?
5. Do you have less energy than you seem to need or would like to have?
6. Do you have too many things to do and not enough time to do them?
7. Do you have headaches or stomach problems?
8. Do you feel pressure to accomplish or to get things done?
9. Are you very concerned about being either well-liked or successful?
10. Do you perform well enough in life to satisfy yourself?
11. Do you get satisfaction from the small joys or simple pleasures of life?
12. Are you able to really relax and have fun?

Scoring: 1 point for a yes answer to 1-9 or no answer to 10-12. A score of 4 or more suggests that you may be under significant stress.

TIPS FOR REDUCING STRESS

1. **Learn to plan.** Disorganization can breed stress. Having too many projects going simultaneously often leads to confusion, forgetfulness, and the sense that uncompleted projects are hanging over your head. When possible, take on projects one at a time and work on them until completed.
2. **Recognize and accept limits.** Most of us set unreasonable and perfectionistic goals for ourselves. We can never be perfect, so we often have a sense of failure or inadequacy no matter how well we perform. Set achievable goals for yourself.
3. **Learn to play.** You need occasionally to escape from the

pressures of life and have fun. Find pastimes which are absorbing and enjoyable to you no matter what your level of ability is.

4. **Be a positive person.** Avoid criticizing others. Learn to praise the things you like in others. Focus upon the good qualities those around you possess. Be sure to give yourself credit and appreciate your own good qualities, as well.
5. **Learn to tolerate and forgive.** Intolerance of others leads to frustration and anger. An attempt to really understand the way other people feel can make you more accepting of them. Accept and forgive yourself also.
6. **Avoid unnecessary competition.** There are many competitive situations in life that we can't avoid. Too much concern with winning in too many areas of life can create excessive tension and anxiety, and make us unnecessarily aggressive.
7. **Get regular physical exercise.** Check with your physician before beginning any exercise program. You will be more likely to stay with an exercise program if you choose one that you really enjoy rather than one that feels like pure hard work and drudgery.
8. **Learn a systematic, drug-free method of relaxing.** Meditation, yoga, or any of a variety of relaxation techniques can be learned from various accredited teachers and licensed psychotherapists.
9. **Talk out your troubles.** Find a friend, member of the clergy, faculty member, counselor, or psycho-therapist you can be open with. Expressing your "bottled up" tension to a sympathetic ear can be incredibly helpful.
10. **Change your thinking.** How we feel emotionally often depends on our outlook or philosophy of life. Changing one's beliefs is a difficult and painstaking process. There is little practical wisdom in the modern world to guide us through our lives. No one has all the answers, but some answers are available.

Adapted from
Dr. Frank C. Richardson, Associate Professor,
Department of Educational Psychology,
Stress, Sanity, and Survival

For the Office of Dr. Darren Buschel

Office Hours

Tuesday 8:30am – 5:30pm
Wednesday 10:00am– 7:00pm
Thursday 8:30am –5:30pm
Friday 8:30am – 5:30pm

(weekends and evening appts available)

Location

Springfield Dental Centre
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