Conservative Therapy for TMJ Pain

What is the cause of TMJ Pain (Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction - TMD)?

1. The majority of TMJ pain is caused by overuse & inflammation of muscles around the jaw joint.
2. TMJ pain can also be caused by functional problems within the joint itself, but it is often caused by muscle inflammation and overuse that occurs during times of stress. This stress can cause clenching and/or grinding of the teeth.
3. A significant portion of the population will experience TMJ pain at some time throughout their life, and the symptoms tend to improve with time through conservative measures.

Conservative Therapy for Relief of TMJ Pain may include:

1. **DIET**: Soft foods (prevents over activity of chewing muscles)
2. **MOTRIN:** Motrin/Advil (doses as indicated on the bottle) periodically when pain is at its worst. This helps to reduce both pain and muscle inflammation.
3. **HEAT:** Use a heating pad on the side of the face near the joint for 15 minutes on both sides each night before bed.
4. **STRETCH:** Stretching exercises which allow your mouth to open as wide as it can without causing pain. This helps to stretch muscles around the jaw and to facilitate muscle lengthening and relaxation (2x/day for 5 min each).
5. **RETAINER:** A clear retainer on the upper and lower teeth to be worn while sleeping helps to keep your teeth apart and relaxes the muscles around the TMJ.
6. **HABITS:** Avoid repetitive chewing (e.g., excessive chewing on pen caps, nails, or gum). Chewing gum for a few minutes several times a day is ok.
7. **RELAXATION:** Finding time during the day to mentally and physically relax will help to improve symptoms significantly.

This protocol is effective in providing significant relief for a large percentage of patients. If these conservative methods are not effective, we can refer you to a TMD specialist for more advanced diagnosis and treatment. We are here to help you! Call us at 610-615-3166 with any questions - we would love to assist you!

"The path we take together is just as important as the final result"
DCO Orthodontic Specialists