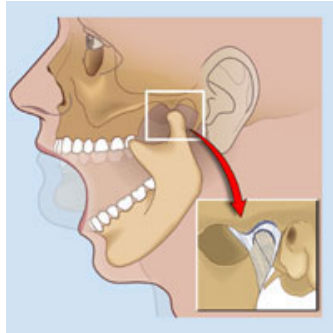


## Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction



Doctors and dentists are familiar with the painful condition of temporomandibular joint dysfunction. This ailment is characterized by pain, clicking or locking at the jaw during activities involving mouth movement such as yawning or chewing.

Individuals who suffer temporomandibular joint dysfunction may experience symptoms such as

- Jaw pain
- Ear pain
- Jaw stiffness or locking
- Difficulty chewing food
- Headaches
- Clicking, grinding or popping sounds with jaw movement

Physiotherapists who specialize in the treatment of temporomandibular joint dysfunction have participated in post-graduate training to understand the biomechanics of the temporomandibular joint. They are able to assess the mobility of the temporomandibular joint, assess the function of muscles acting to move the jaw and identify pathomechanics including displacement of the intra-articular disc relative to the condyle of the mandible.

As part of a comprehensive physiotherapy assessment the mobility and mechanics of the craniovertebral region and cervical spine are also evaluated. Postural muscle imbalances of these regions have been demonstrated to affect the resting position of the temporomandibular joint, and the length-tension relationship of the jaw musculature.

Physiotherapy treatment for temporomandibular joint dysfunction has been demonstrated by the research literature as an effective approach to management of this condition. Physiotherapy care may include:

- Pain relieving modalities such as soft tissue massage, acupuncture, ultrasound, electrotherapy
- Manual therapy to increase mobility at the cervical spine and temporomandibular joints
- Exercise to restore strength and symmetry to the muscles of the temporomandibular joints
- Flexibility and strengthening exercise to optimize cervical and craniovertebral posture

### References:

Furto ES et al. *Manual physical therapy interventions and exercise for patients with temporomandibular disorders.* *Cranio.* 2006 Oct;24(4):283-91.

Kraus, S. *Temporomandibular disorders, head and orofacial pain: cervical spine considerations.* *Dent Clin North Am.* 2007 Jan;51(1):161-93, vii. Review.

Medlicott MS, Harris SR. *A systematic review of the effectiveness of exercise, manual therapy, electrotherapy, relaxation training, and biofeedback in the management of temporomandibular disorder.* *Phys Ther.* 2006 Jul;86(7):955-73. Review.

Shin BC et al. *Effectiveness of combining manual therapy and acupuncture on temporomandibular joint dysfunction: a retrospective study.* *Am J Chin Med.* 2007;35(2):203-8.

Smith, P et al. *The efficacy of acupuncture in the treatment of temporomandibular joint myofascial pain: a randomised controlled trial.* *J Dent.* 2007 Mar;35(3):259-67

*For further information about physiotherapy treatment for temporomandibular joint dysfunction, or to book an appointment with a registered physiotherapist who specializes in the treatment of this condition, please contact Stonetown Physiotherapy & Sports Injuries Clinic*

**519.284.2569**