

## MICHIGAN/TANNER SPLINT – HARD OCCLUSAL SPLINT (APPLIANCE)

A Michigan splint is a dental appliance custom-made from hard clear acrylic (plastic). The splint fits securely over the biting surfaces of your top teeth and provides an effective and reversible treatment for a range of dental and jaw problems.

**What are the benefits?** The splint will help us diagnose whether you grind or clench the teeth at night. If you have painful or clicking jaw joints, you should notice an improvement in these symptoms after you have been wearing the splint for a few weeks. The splint can protect worn-down teeth from further damage.

**How many appointments will I need?** A great deal of care and skill is used in making your splint. You will usually need to attend over several visits, to allow for the clinical stages. The first two appointments may last up to one hour each.

- At the first appointment we will take impressions (or moulds) of your top and lower teeth, and two other measurements to accurately record your bite.
- 2-3 weeks later we will fit and adjust the splint. Once fitted, you should wear the splint every night (or during the day also if the dentist has asked you to) until your next appointment on a for review.

## NIGHT GUARD – SOFT SPLINT

A night guard is a soft dental splint, which is made from thin flexible plastic. The splint is usually made to fit over all the teeth in your upper jaw. Occasionally we provide a lower splint.

### What are the advantages?

The soft splint is quick and easy to make, and usually needs minimal adjustment. The splint provides an effective and reversible treatment for the following two conditions:

- as a protective measure to prevent further damage to your teeth or gums/cheeks
- to take the pressure off your jaw joint and relieve painful or clicking jaw problems.

**How long will I need to wear the splint?** We will review your progress after about 2-6 weeks. After this time we will advise you how to use and wear the splint.

### Home Care

- When you first start wearing the splint it will feel strange and may make our mouth water, this is quite normal. Your mouth will soon stop watering as you get used to wearing the splint.
- For the first few nights, put the splint in 1 hour before you go to bed so that you start to get used to it by the time you go to sleep. You may have been advised to wear it throughout the day in which case follow that advice.
- Once you feel confident wearing the splint, fit it in just before you go to sleep.
- Remember to brush and floss your teeth **before** wearing the splint.
- In the morning, brush the splint on both sides with toothbrush and paste. Remember to fill the washbasin with water before you clean the hard splint so that it doesn't break if you drop it.
- After rinsing your splint with **cold** water, leave it to dry. Do not wash or put the splint in hot water, as this will distort the splint. Keep the splint in the storage box provided.
- Support your jaw when yawning and avoid opening your mouth wide.
- Remove the splint for eating. Cut up your food into small pieces and avoid biting into hard foods (for example, nuts or raw carrots). Chew with your back teeth.
- If the splint causes discomfort, it may need to be adjusted
- Heat packs may help to relieve pain in the muscles around the jaw joints