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HEALTH

Solve issues from grinding of teeth with simple fixes

By *Stephen Durham*

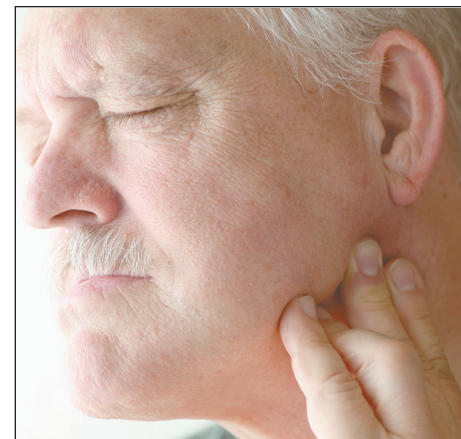
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Waking up with a headache or a sore jaw might be the only signal we get of bruxism – that's the medical term for clenching or grinding the teeth. Most everyone does it from time to time, often in our sleep.

But when grinding or clenching goes on consistently it can wear down your teeth, even fracture or loosen them. There are effective treatments, but the hardest part seems to be finding out that the problem exists.

Your dentist can help. Signs of unusual wear show up when your teeth are examined, and that's not unusual.

Deciding to deal with it is the important thing.



A poor bite alignment, crooked or missing teeth, stress or anxiety – even sleep disorders can lead to bruxism. When the clenching and grinding start, it's important to interrupt that cycle, and the sooner the better.

Often people just don't get to it because those feelings in the jaw, that headache, just seem normal. Even clenching and grinding during wakeful hours can be easy to overlook, blending in with our everyday experience.

Simple solutions, and lots of them

Ways to address bruxism range from a simple mouth guard to a custom-fit device that rests the jaw in your own perfect alignment.

With computer imaging, qualified dentists can determine the unique position that relaxes your jaw and the powerful muscles around it.

There's still some art to the perfect solution, but the guesswork has been replaced by science.

The answer might be much easier than you imagine. The first step to a more comfortable jaw, a lighter expression and pain-free days and nights can start with a conversation at your dentist's office.

You'll be glad you made the time.

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