SELF-CARE TIPS FOR TEMPOROMANDIBULAR (TMJ) DISORDERS

1. REST THE MUSCLES AND JOINTS. This will allow healing.
   Rest includes:
   a) A SOFT FOOD DIET—Avoid crunchy and chewy foods like hard nuts, chips, carrots, and hard breads.
   b) AVOID CHEWING GUM
   c) NO CLENCHING Learn to say “teeth apart, face and jaw relaxed”
2. AVOID OPENING TOO WIDE. This protects the joints and prevents them from locking open.
   a) YAWN AGAINST PRESSURE
   b) EAT SMALL BITES
3. APPLY COLD for 5-10 minutes for severe pain, new injuries (less than 72 hours).
4. APPLY MOIST HEAT for 20 minutes for mild to moderate pain to increase circulation, and muscle relaxation, this promotes healing.
5. USE HEAT AND ICE for quick relief from muscle pain. Apply heat for 5 seconds then ice for 5 seconds and repeat 4-5 times.
6. MASSAGE the jaw and temple muscles. This stimulates circulation, relaxes muscles, and decreases soreness...
8. **MAINTAIN GOOD POSTURE:** Avoid a forward head posture which may increase jaw and neck muscle activity and soreness.

9. **TELEPHONE USE:** Do not cradle the phone it irritates jaw and neck muscle.

10. **SLEEPING POSITION:** Sleep on side. Use a pillow to support between neck and shoulders, and soft support along the face and jaw, or sleep on your back with the back of the neck supported.

11. **EXERCISE** 20-30 minutes at a time, 3-4 times a week. Choose low impact exercises to minimize pressure on the joints.

12. **YOGA AND MEDITATION** are excellent methods to reduce stress.

13. **OVER -THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS** are helpful for pain and inflammation. Take 2 aspirin or ibuprofen 4 times daily, according to directions.

14. **GOOD NUTRITION** promotes joint and muscle healing.

15. **AN ATHLETIC MOUTHGUARD** can provide temporary pain relief until you can consult your dentist.