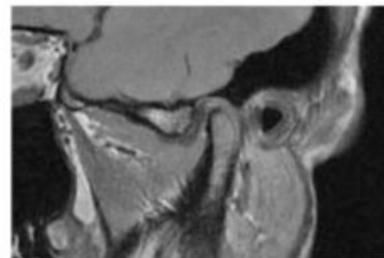
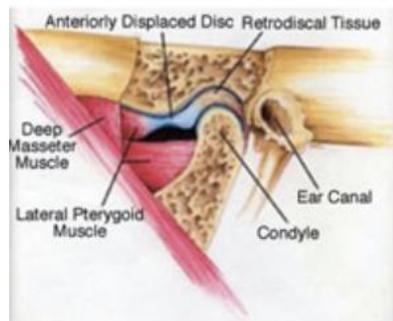
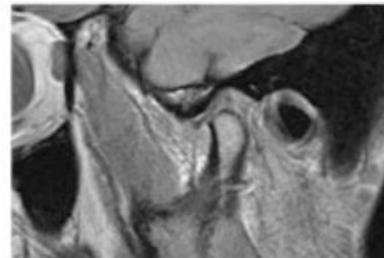
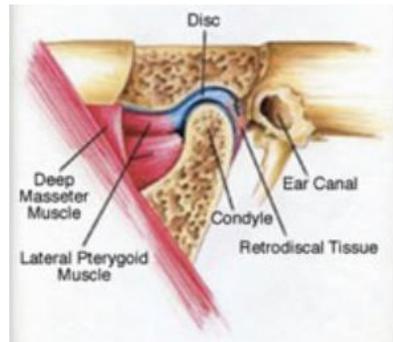


Jaw Joint Displacement

The position of your teeth can also affect the position of your jaw joints. Each jaw joint is a ball and socket joint. When functioning properly, the ball and socket do not actually touch because a thin disc of cartilage rides between them. The disc acts as a cushion and allows the joint to move smoothly. Each disc is held in place and guided by muscle. If your bite is not right, the disc is pulled forward by hyperactivity of the muscle. Since the disc no longer serves as a cushion, the joint itself now rubs against the boney socket and presses on pain fibers. Mild displacements cause a clicking or popping sound in the jaw joint; more severe displacements can be very painful and eventually can cause permanent damage to the joint. An unstable bite can cause both jaw joint displacement and muscle strain and pain. When this condition is prolonged, the body begins to compensate and adapt by involving muscles in the neck, back, and shoulders.



Diagnosis and Treatment

Diagnosis of TMD involves a thorough history; an examination of the jaw joint and chewing muscles; evaluating joint noises; and checking the teeth and bite for wear and proper alignment. In some case, additional records may include study models for detailed bite analysis and imaging such as CBCT or MRI. Since the teeth, jaw joints, and muscles can all be involved, treatment for this condition can vary and will usually involve several phases. The first phase is to relieve the muscle spasm and pain and stabilize the jaw joint in the jaw socket. Often a temporary device known as a bite splint is worn over the teeth

until the muscles relax and the pain is relieved. Once your jaw joint is stabilized, the second phase is to evaluate your bite for corrective options so you are not dependent on the “bite splint” for comfort and stability. Permanent correction involves the selective reshaping of the teeth; adding to the teeth with conservative bonding materials; building crowns on the teeth and/or orthodontics. Rarely, if the jaw joint itself is damaged, it may need surgical care. Ultimately, we can stabilize your bite so that the teeth, muscles, and joints all work together naturally for optimal long-term health and comfort.

