

TMJ Dysfunction

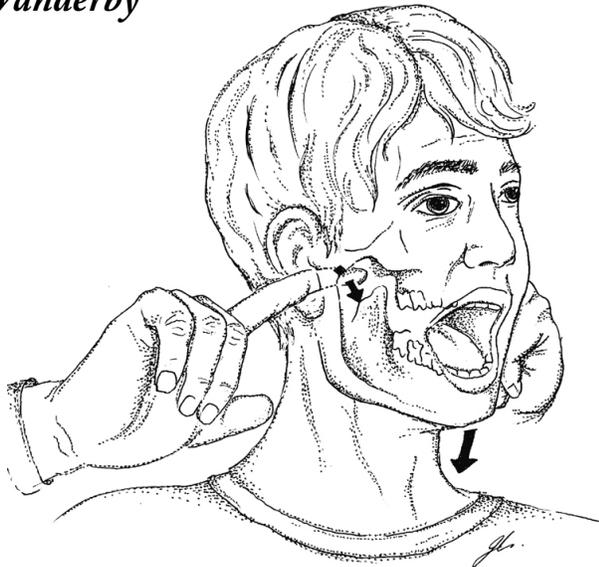
Many conditions called TMJ disorders are not, in the strict sense of the word, disorders of the joint at all but simply dysfunction of the masticatory muscles.

~ Lorenz, Patwardhan, & Vanderby

Snap, crackle, pop! While it is normal to experience sounds like these during the consumption of your favorite breakfast cereal, it is not normal to feel them in your jaw. **You may feel pain around the ear, jaw, teeth or head with tender and sore jaw muscles.** You might also experience headache, and neck, back, and shoulder pain. Does this sound like you? You may suffer from a condition called Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJD); usually occurring on one side of the jaw and affecting females between the ages of 20-40.

What causes TMJD?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Physical Trauma | fractures, dislocations/subluxations, whiplash, physical assault, posture |
| Micro Trauma | dental malocclusion - abnormal teeth contact with lower/upper jaw |
| Musculoskeletal | trigger points, bruxism (unconscious teeth grinding), prolonged dental work |
| Organic Disease | Osteoarthritis / Rheumatoid arthritis |
| Emotional/Psychological | Holding back of words not said, childhood trauma, sexual abuse, stress |



During your initial appointment, **your Massage Therapist will thoroughly assess your jaw** and narrow down the possible causes and precipitating factors involved with your condition. An in-depth health history will be obtained along with a series of active, passive and resisted movement tests. Remember to give your MT as much information as you can to help aid in his/her clinical evaluation.

Massage therapy for TMJD frequently involves intraoral massage (inside the mouth). Due to the sensitive nature of this treatment, your therapist will ask for special consent and permission to use such techniques. If you're not comfortable having your mouth muscles massaged, alternate techniques can be used that are less-invasive (also less effective, however).

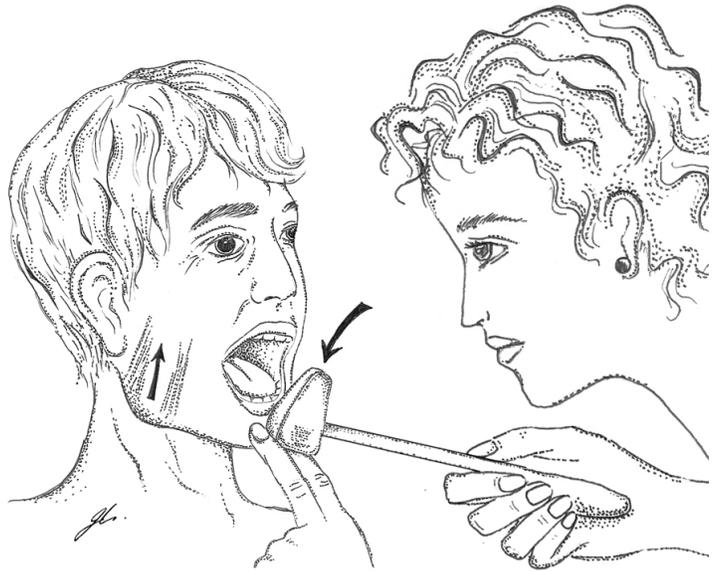
To palpate the temporomandibular joint, your Massage Therapist will use protective gloves and place their index finger into the front part of your ears. You'll then be asked to slowly open and close your mouth. Your therapist will be observing whether or not there is clicking, grinding, or limited movement present.

Cont'd on reverse side...

TMJ Dysfunction (Cont'd)

Symptoms Checklist

- Usually affecting one side, sometimes both
- Muscle tenderness, reduced mobility, dull aching pain around the jaw - radiating to the teeth, ear/temple, and sometimes throat
- Incoordination of masticory muscles
- General hypermobility and protrusion of the mandible (lower jaw) and/or disc
- Subluxation of the TMJ with clicking/popping
- Later stages present with increased pain and greater reduction in mobility
- Muscles of the jaw may go into spasm
- TMJ locking, subluxation/dislocation, or deviation of the mandible during mouth opening
- Difficulty swallowing caused by masticory spasm, hypertonicity, and trigger points
- Ear involvement may occur - pressure, tinnitus (ringing of the ears), or earaches
- Headaches, neck/back/shoulder pain
- Pain and mobility usually worse in the morning



Therapeutic massage aims to alleviate the symptoms of TMJD and restore proper health to the affected muscles, ligaments and connective tissues. When intraoral massage is used your therapist will be wearing latex protective gloves. Massage normalizes compensating muscle tension, melts away trigger points and spasms, and helps to maintain existing mobility. In the long-term, massage restores optimal joint mechanics of the jaw and normalizes strength to the depressor muscles of the lower jaw (especially the lateral pterygoid muscle).

There are many exercises you can do at home to help rehabilitate your jaw. According to your individual condition, your Massage Therapist will prescribe a series of stretching and strengthening maneuvers for your jaw, hydrotherapy, and relaxation techniques to improve your stress levels.

Above all, an important aspect of your treatment plan is to **assess causative factors and to make the appropriate modifications to those activities which precipitate TMJD symptoms.** Overall recovery depends on the nature and extent of your individual case. Bruxism and dental malocclusion have been noted to significantly prolong recovery time. Sessions usually last 45 minutes to 1 hour, which includes massage to the back, shoulders, neck, and of course your jaw!

Call your MT today for more information...

For appointment bookings or more information, please call: (905) 897-8889