

Advice – Temporomandibular joint (TMJ)

Postural advice:

- Posture is very important and can influence your jaw symptoms so make sure you adopt good posture!
- Your body, like your car, works best when it is properly aligned. If you sit or stand slumped over and shifted, the bones of your spine cannot be held in line so your head and jaw (which sit on top of the spine) cannot be held straight.
- Postural correction does take a conscious effort on your part! It will not just happen. You need to correct frequently throughout the day when you adopt various positions. A few examples of when you can correct are: every time you walk through a door or see yourself in a mirror; when the phone rings; when you are in your car waiting at a red light; or at every metro stop. Hold for 10 seconds at a time, do this many times a day and the effect will add up!
- Some bad habits may need to be broken such as: leaning with your chin in the palm of your hand; cradling the phone between your head and the ear; or getting from the bed leading with your chin poking forward as opposed to rolling on your side holding the chin in. These activities are known to compress the joint of the jaw.
- Take time every day to concentrate on your breathing and encourage your entire body, including your jaw and face, to let go and relax. Breathe by moving the lower ribs laterally.

Activities to modify:

- Avoid opening your mouth fully – your joint does not need that extra stress
- When yawning, place your tongue on the roof of your mouth to avoid full opening
- Cut your food into small pieces. Try not to take big bites (like huge hamburgers)
- Avoid eating foods that are too hard, crunchy or chewy (nuts, raw vegetables, bagels)
- Determine which side you prefer to chew on and try to use the other side. This will help to distribute the forces more equally on both sides and will diminish the compression on the painful joint.