

# HEADACHES, TEETH and the TMJ

## The most important joint in the body

Perhaps the most important joint in the body is the occipital-atlanto-axial joint. This is the joint between the skull and the first and second vertebrae. It is probably the cause of more problems than any other joint in the body. But certainly, a close second would have to be the temporomandibular joint (TMJ). These are the two hinge joints at either side of the jaw. It has been shown that a good portion of the brain is dedicated solely to the maintenance of the TMJ. If the TMJ is not balanced, you may suffer from many serious problems, not the least of which is chronic pain.

I know you may be thinking that your shoulder is the most important because of aching bursitis, or your lumbosacral joint because of pain in the lower back and legs, or perhaps your knees etc. Trust me, the TMJ causes more problems than all or any of these joints combined - I have witnessed it personally!

Perhaps the most insidious problem related to these joints when they are not in balance is that they *mimic all types of other problems*. This can send you to all kinds of doctors for treatment that is incorrect simply because the jaw joint will not be considered as the prime cause. Some problems that may be caused by improperly balanced jaw joints, include *headaches and migraines, teeth grinding, dizziness and faintness, neck and teeth pain, upper back pain, ear pain, ringing in the ear, inability to think properly, memory problems, and more*. And of course, there are the obvious problems of clicking and pain in the jaw joints themselves.

Today dentists are becoming more aware of the importance of this joint. Many are using splints and other measures to correct the imbalance in the TMJ. Many of these techniques can *CURE* longstanding headaches and migraines. This is very rewarding to the Dr. and of course patients are overjoyed.

### *Do You Suspect TMJ?*

Should you have some of the symptoms listed here and no one can find the cause, suspect TMJ disorder. Most often TMJ disorder occurs because the upper and lower teeth meet incorrectly. When you close your teeth together one or both TMJs are pulled from their respective joints. This often starts with little to no symptoms but over the years it often progresses. One will first get muscle pain and spasms. If TMJ disorder is not resolved it will often lead to headaches. While the disorder progresses, patients will often times get migraines. In our practice we have seen many patients who came to us with a long history of symptoms and have been diagnosed with Fibromyalgia. While no one has proven the exact cause of this syndrome, there is strong evidence that long term pain signals to the brain will cause it to “freak out”. The brain in turn will send out signals that do not make sense therefore producing a variety of symptoms.

Those who have had motor vehicle accidents or traumatic events early in life seem to be more susceptible to this disorder. A childhood fall can cause growth deformities. TMJ disorder also has a greater prevalence in females over males. I have noted in my practice that TMJ symptoms occur about 5-7 years after a car accident.

The truth is that over 40 million Americans suffer from chronic headaches. Think of how many pills you have taken in order to deal with the constant pain and discomfort- and - to no avail. Think of the damage that is being done to your body from long term pill-taking. Think about the amount of money spent on physicians, ENT's Neurologists, Chiropractors and countless x-rays and MRI's. All this- and no answer.

Truth is, this could be picked up in a dental exam. The problem is that dental training barely touches on this subject. If all dentists were trained to deal with this we would vastly improve the life of millions.

In addition, most physicians have little knowledge of this. Patients will often come in with a complaint of headaches and earaches and be bounced around from office to office. Often times they will be left with multiple jars of pills. They will rarely be referred to the appropriate dental facility. Those dentists who have decided to pursue this subject can easily deal with this problem.

If patients knew that their teeth may be causing their headaches, I would need to add a new wing on my office to treat them. I can't remember the last time a patient called and said I have a migraine, can you fix my teeth.

That's where I come in. I have completed intensive training at 2 TMJ programs. This allows me to properly assess your problem, diagnose and ultimately solve it. While it's true that your problem may be from multiple sources, we will try to figure that out as well. If we need other trained professionals in other disciplines, we can steer you in the proper direction. I am passionate about spreading this message to the general public as well as the medical community so I may help those who are suffering. You would be surprised how little it takes to cure this problem, not to mention how much you will save on aspirin!

Thanks for taking the first step in calling my office. I look forward to serving you and solving your problem.

Warm regards,

Glen M. Goldstein DMD DICOI