

Health Bulletin

Dentists Help Treat Chronic Headaches

(NAPSA)—A number of chronic headache sufferers are finding relief in what may be a surprising place: their dentist's chair.

Experts say pain caused by temporomandibular (jaw joint) disorder, or TMD—which is commonly referred to as TMJ—causes migraine and tension headaches for numerous Americans. And a trip to a specially trained dentist could provide relief.

“When your bite is not right, it can lead to chronic pain. Just like flexing your arm for a second is comfortable, but flexing it for two to three minutes starts to hurt, holding the teeth together for a long period and in a poor position causes muscle pain,” says Dr. Mark Duncan, clinical director at LVI Global, a postgraduate dental-training facility.

In addition to chronic headaches, TMD has been linked to grinding of the teeth, breathing problems and sleep disorders, as well as facial pain, neck, shoulder and back pain, clicking or popping in the jaw and limited jaw movement. Fortunately, Dr. Duncan says, “for chronic headache sufferers, there is hope.” TMD is treatable.

- First, a neuromuscular dentist performs a comprehensive evaluation including an electronic analysis of jaw muscles to find their optimal resting position.

- Next, a jaw-repositioning orthotic—which looks like an ath-



A trip to a neuromuscular dentist could help treat chronic headaches.

lete's mouth guard—is used to temporarily maintain this new relaxed position. Patients often report that pain they have endured for many years dissipates or goes away entirely in a matter of days.

- Finally, a patient can be fitted with crowns and veneers to permanently hold the new pain-free jaw position.

Less than 5 percent of the world's dentists are trained in neuromuscular dentistry. To find a specially trained dentist in your area, visit www.leadingdentists.com.