



Health Matters

The Nightly Grind: Knowing When to Invest in a Night Guard

(NAPS)—While mouth guards are nearly ubiquitous with athletes, more and more people of all kinds are similarly protecting their teeth with night guards. When and whether you need a night guard, though, isn't always obvious.

If you've been waking up with a sore jaw or if your dentist notices signs of teeth grinding—known as bruxism—or if you are under a lot of stress and anxiety, or if you take certain types of medicines, you may develop issues which can often be corrected by wearing a night guard.

“Night guards are a great appliance to help minimize the effects of bruxism, including tooth chipping or other damage caused by grinding and clenching,” said Kyle Dosch, DDS, Delta Dental of Washington's dental director and member dentist.

If bruxism is left untreated it can lead to jaw problems, tooth loss, and damage to your cheeks. If a dentist diagnoses you with bruxism, they may suggest you use a night guard to help alleviate further damage.

Benefits to wearing a night guard

Wearing a night guard can have a host of benefits:

Protects your teeth: Night guards can stop damage to your teeth before it starts, including damage to fillings, cracking or chipping teeth.

Prevents headaches: People with bruxism can get frequent headaches because of the pressure of grinding or clenching their teeth all night long.

Less jaw pain: Grinding your teeth takes work. You use your jaw muscles, and all that activity at night can cause you to wake up with jaw pain.



Teeth protection at night can lead to better sleep, healthier teeth and fewer headaches.

Night guards can be custom-made at the dentist's office or purchased over the counter at a drugstore. Over-the-counter night guards come in two types: a one-size-fits-all type you put on directly out of the box or a boil-and-bite version, which helps create a moderately customized version.

Dental experts say your best choice is the custom-made option. Your dentist will make a night guard using impressions of your teeth that fits your mouth better than a store-bought version. While custom-made night guards are more expensive, they also last longer and are often more comfortable than over-the-counter versions. Delta Dental of Washington's Plus Ortho Plan covers night guards provided by a dentist.

Learn More

For further information about oral health, visit Delta Dental of Washington's blog at www.deltadentalwa.com/blog. For more information about Delta Dental of Washington's plans that cover night guards, visit the website at www.deltadentalwa.com.

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