

NIGHTGUARD INSTRUCTIONS

- Some of our patients have sleep bruxism, which means they grind and clench their teeth during the night. This grinding can cause excessive wear and even fracture of the teeth, eventually requiring extensive dental work to repair the damage. Thankfully there is a solution: night guards (also known as bruxism splints). These are plastic appliances that fit over the teeth and protect them from grinding.
- Night guards must be worn throughout the night. This means patients wear their night guards for an average of around eight hours a day. Therefore, it's important to keep night guards clean and cared for. If you're unlucky enough to have bruxism then this article will show you how to take care of your night guard.
- **Keep your night guard clean**
- You should clean your night guard once a day to remove any food and bacteria that transferred onto the guard overnight. The best way to clean a night guard is simply by brushing it with a toothbrush and toothpaste. After brushing, rinse off the toothpaste with warm water.
- Some dentists recommend patients store their night guard in cold tap water when not in use. Others recommend drying the guard and then storing it in a container. Whichever method you use, be sure to clean the glass or container regularly too. This is because placing a night guard into a container that hasn't been cleaned in a long time can contaminate the guard with bacteria.
- **Keep your night guard away from heat**
- Some night guards are made of a material that changes shape under heat, such as boiling water. However, sometimes even heat from a radiator or sunlight can affect the shape of night guards. Therefore, don't leave your night guard in a hot area, such as in direct sunlight, because this can change its shape.
- **Replace your night guard when needed**
- Like all good things, night guards do not last forever. They can only endure the grinding of a patient's teeth for so long before they thin and break.
- Your guard's lifespan will depend on the severity of the patient's bruxism. Patients who grind their teeth a lot can wear down a night guard in just a few weeks. Other patients find their night guard lasts months before it needs replacing.
- The lifespan also depends on the material it is made from. Patients with severe bruxism need acrylic night guards, which is a very tough material and can last for up to five years. But since these guards last so long, it is especially important to take care of them properly.
- Examine your guard regularly for holes and other signs of breakage. If there are large holes or cracks, then it's time for a replacement.