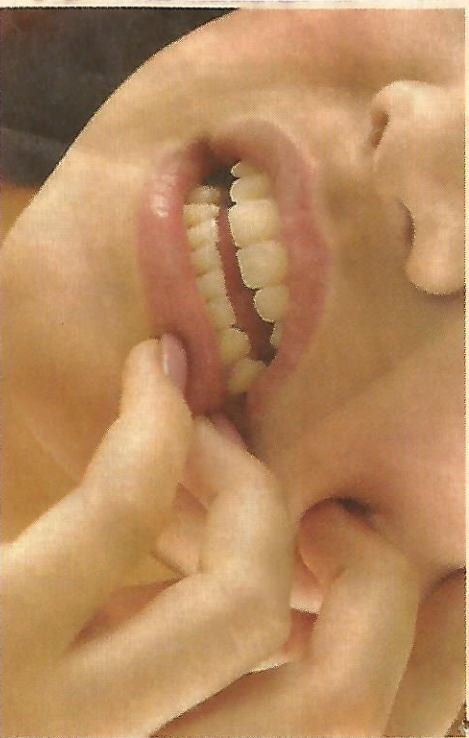


STRESS AND YOUR TEETH

The stress in your life may be making your teeth sensitive



Every night as you sleep, you could be adding to your teeth sensitivity.

Teeth grinding is one of the main causes of teeth sensitivity. It is a medical condition wherein a person unconsciously clenches his or her teeth, mostly while asleep. Also known as 'bruxism', teeth grinding affects as many as 96 per cent of adults. It usually occurs at night, while the person is not even aware of it to stop it. You may have been a

tooth grinder for years and not realised it. The leading cause of teeth grinding is stress.



Dr Richa Raj
Dental Surgeon
Pearly White
Dental Center

Bruxism can also contribute to gum recession and decay. It makes healthy teeth hypersensitive to cold. Damage caused to the teeth by bruxism is irreversible.

Too much work, less sleep and too many worries lead to build up of frenzied energy in the body that finds an outlet channel only when you sleep by letting itself out

upon your teeth. Internalised anger in persons who have anger problems also leads to build up of repressed energy which has to go somewhere.

Effective cures for bruxism

As you may expect, the cure for bruxism is dependent on the root cause of the teeth grinding disease.

1. Stress management

It is usually performed through total body relaxation achieved with meditation and exercise. The following techniques will help you in managing stress and relaxation

Learn coping skills: See a psychologist or psychiatrist. Take an assertiveness training course. Practice techniques such as progressive relaxation or self-hypnosis. Listen to relaxation tapes. In other words, find something that helps you to better handle the stress in your life.

► Take a warm bath before bedtime. The warmth of the water may temporarily relax your jaw muscles and save from teeth grinding.
► Do your breathing exercises a few minutes before going to sleep. It will

ensure restful sleep every time.
► Massage. It works for the rest of your body, so try a gentle massage of your jaw muscles.
► Exercise your body. A walk or other mild exercise may help relieve some of the tension and stress that's causing bruxism.

2. Dental device

Wear a night guard. Your dentist can make a plastic or acrylic appliance for you to wear to stop teeth grinding at night. Although it may not stop you from grinding teeth, it will redistribute the forces from grinding and protect your teeth from damage. Keep in mind, however, that in order for the night guard to do any good, you must remember to wear the night guard each night for it to work properly. It takes a few nights to get used to, but it is usually comfortable to wear. For people with abnormal teeth alignment, crowns or overbites on teeth can be used to reshape the teeth surface for better chewing. This will not only address the inability to chew food properly but also tooth sensitivity.

Other useful tips

► Give your jaw muscles a break. Limit steak, hard-crusted bread, popcorn, gum and other chewy foods that give your jaw a workout, especially when jaw discomfort is at its worst

► Avoid or cut back on food drinks that contain caffeine, colas, chocolate and coffee
► Avoid alcohol. Grinding intensify after alcohol consumption
► Do not chew on pencils or anything that is not food
► Chewing gum as it allows your muscles to get more used and makes you more likely to grind your teeth
► Sleep on your back. Try yourself from sleeping on or on your stomach
► Drink warm milk or hot before going to bed

For enquiries, call 97052622 health@apexsuff.com

IN A NUTSHELL

Common symptoms of teeth grinding

- Intense clenching of teeth to wake up the person sleeping besides you
- Flattened, worn down, chipped, cracked, and loosened teeth
- Sensitive teeth
- Pain and tightness in the jaw, their muscles
- Bartraches, headaches and pains

Main causative factors for bruxism

- Stress
- Frustration and suppressed anger
- Aggressive personality
- Abnormal alignment of teeth