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## **TMJ/JAW CARE INSTRUCTIONS:**

The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) allows mouth opening and closing. Sometimes, the muscles that help the joint work can become fatigued or sore, positioning your jaw incorrectly and causing various symptoms, such as muscle aches, earaches, neck tension, and tooth pain. Here are some helpful tips to lessen the discomfort.

### **AVOID:**

- Chewing gum
- Clenching your teeth
- Gnawing on hard or chewy food, candy, etc.
- Biting your fingernails

### **DO:**

- Use warm or cold compresses (whichever you prefer) on the outside of your jaw.
- Take anti-inflammatory medications as recommended on the bottle for 2-3 days to reduce swelling and relax the muscles.
- Practice good posture.
- Massage muscles.

### **EXERCISES:**

Usually doing these exercises twice a day for 5 minutes each time will be most beneficial (after you wake up and right before you go to bed are easy to remember). Feeling tension in the back of your neck or under your chin while doing this exercise is normal. Looking in the mirror while you do the exercise is helpful to check that your lower teeth move downwards in a straight line, and not deviate to the side. There should be no clicking or popping in the joints as you do this exercise, so repeat the exercise, adjusting your position until there are no jaw noises. You may increase the frequency of this exercise after the first week. It is normal for the pain to be worse when you first start this exercise, but over time, the exercises should become easier. You should notice a difference in the muscles after a few weeks of exercises.

1. Sit upright.
2. Close your mouth and touch your teeth fully together, but **DON'T CLENCH**.
3. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth behind your upper front teeth.
4. Run the tip of your tongue backwards to the back of your mouth as far as it will go while keeping your teeth together.
5. Hold your tongue there to keep it touching the soft part of the roof of your mouth.
6. Slowly open your mouth until the tongue pulls away from the roof of your mouth. Don't open further.
7. Stay in this position for 5 seconds; then close your mouth and relax.
8. Repeat this slowly but firmly for 5 minutes.