

## **TMJ (TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT) PROBLEMS**

Your doctor has diagnosed a TMJ problem. This may include arthritis of the jaw joint, muscle spasm around the jaw joint or injury to the ligaments of to there soft tissues around the joint causing pain in the ear, head or neck. While your basic problem may require the attention of a dentist, or an oral surgeon, there are some things that you can do to alleviate the discomfort you are experiencing.

1. An anti-inflammatory medicine, such as aspirin, Advil, Motrin or other similar medication is often helpful. Tylenol is not as helpful in this situation because it does not relieve inflammation. If you have an ulcer or a bleeding disorder and cannot take the above medications, then Tylenol or other non-aspirin medication for pain can be taken.
2. Application of heat or an ice bag (depending on which your doctor recommends) to the area around the ear and temple or other affected areas is often helpful if the pain is from muscle spasm. Heat may also relieve some of the discomfort associated with arthritic changes in the joint.
3. Eat a soft diet using small bits. Avoid chewing gum, and avoid eating foods that require wide mouth opening or excessive chewing of hard consistencies.
4. Consult your dentist or oral surgeon as recommended by your doctor.