

Instructions for MPD Patients

As the doctor has explained to you, the problem of muscle spasms in and around the jaw joint is one that can be controlled, but it is necessary for you to carefully follow the instruction provided in order to achieve relief.

Medications: You may have been prescribed one of several medications which are discussed below.

Ibuprofen: Also known as “Advil” or “Motrin”, these drugs are very effective pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medications. One of the main causes of pain of the jaw muscles is inflammation. As inflammation spreads within a muscle, pain increases, and function becomes more limited. For these medications to work, they need to be taken as prescribed. If the medications are not taken on a regular schedule, they will not be effective in controlling your symptoms.

NSAIDs (Flurbiprofen): This is also an anti-inflammatory medication, the main difference being that it only needs to be taken twice a day. It is merely another drug similar to ibuprofen.

Flexeril (Cyclobenzaprine): This is a muscle relaxant and is reserved for cases with severe joint symptoms. It is not prescribed in many cases as it can cause dizziness and excessive drowsiness.

Soft Diet: This is a very important part of the management of MPD. Hard, crunchy or chewy foods cause the jaw muscles to work harder and increase the inflammation and pain. By limiting foods to those with a soft consistency, it gives the muscles a chance to rest. This does not work if done only part of the time. One meal or snack which requires chewing can undo several days of healing from a soft diet. Other types of oral function must also be addressed including gum chewing and jaw posturing. Most people would not consider chewing gum potentially harmful. However, the repetitive nature of this activity can easily aggravate these problems.

Moist Heat: Another way of managing the discomfort of these symptoms is through the application of moist heat. This can be in the form of a moist heating pad or hot packs from the drug store. The packs should be applied several times throughout the day, especially when the pain is present.

Massage: One of the most effective ways of relieving the muscle spasms associated with jaw pain is through manual massage. Although it may be uncomfortable, the spasms feel like cords or knots within the body of the muscle. Gently rubbing and massaging these areas can help tremendously in the reduction of these spasms.