



Kenneth E. Moore II, DDS

OCCLUSAL GUARDS / SPLINTS

What Patients Should Know About Occlusal Guards and Splints

Occlusal guards and Splints serve many purposes such as distributing the force through out the arch and protect the teeth from fracture and wear. They do require a getting used to period and proper maintenance.

What to expect?

- 1. Ease into use:** Your mouth will register the occlusal guard as a foreign material, so it is better to ease into use. We have found getting ready for bed and removing it before going to sleep for the first few nights allow for a higher acceptance rate.
- 2. Increased saliva flow initially:** Your mouth may think there is food to chew initially with the added volume and will produce more saliva for the first week or two. It will soon accommodate for the occlusal splint and your salivary flow will return to normal.
- 3. Slight discoloration and wear over time:** The material is made of a medical/dental grade acrylic resin that may discolor over time. This is normal and the prosthesis is still working. You also may see wear facets develop on the plastic. This is also normal as long as there is no perforations in the material.
- 4. Slight loosening over time:** Eventually the initial tightness will be reduced and the occlusal guard or splint will feel more loose. If it stays in place through out the night, this is still functioning normally.

Care and Maintenance

It is important to remove your occlusal guard and clean it daily with a brush and water. If you need extra cleaning, use handsoap rather than toothpaste. The tooth paste is too abrasive and will break down the guard if used long enough. Cleaning tabs can be used, but should be used periodically to refresh the occlusal guard or splint rather than daily cleaning. Avoid bleach and boiling water as this will distort the prosthesis.

You may bring your occlusal guard or splint to your cleaning appointments for evaluation for fit and cleaning. Please notify your hygienist at the start of the appointment as it does take time to get it cleaned thoroughly.

If you are wearing the occlusal guard due to grinding and clenching it will break down over use. This is expected and will need to be replaced periodically. The higher the grinding force the quicker this will be needed. The occlusal guard is meant to take the breakdown rather than your teeth and dental work.

Please be mindful about pets, as they have been known to chew up night guards and splints.

If the bite is uncomfortable, you experience bite changes, or you experience headaches while wearing your prosthesis, discontinue use and notify our office and we will adjust it for you. Your comfort is our priority and we are here to help.