

Acu News

"When we have peace in our hearts and minds, we draw peace into our lives." - Iyanla Vanzant

Acupuncture for Temporomandibular Disorders

Temporomandibular disorders refers to a group of conditions that affect the joints of the jaw or the temporomandibular joints. These joints are located bilaterally on the face, in front of the ears and connecting the jaw bone to the skull. These joints are complex in movement and allow mobility in multiple directions.

For some, temporomandibular disorders (TMD) can be caused by trauma such as a car accident or an impact to the face and the symptoms often appear out of nowhere. Many people do things on a daily basis or have underlying conditions that can cause or contribute to the development of temporomandibular disorders. Things like teeth grinding, gum chewing, excessive stress, malocclusion of teeth and even arthritis can all be reasons that TMD occurs.

The most common symptoms of TMD include pain, headaches, muffled hearing, earaches, pain when chewing, dental pain, chipped or worn teeth, jaw clicking, dizziness, neck pain and difficulty moving the jaw.

Conventional treatments for TMD vary from eating soft foods to taking over-the-counter pain medications and using hot or cold packs. Often, mouth guards and physical therapy are also prescribed. Sometimes specific dental work may also be

suggested. And as a last resort, steroid injections and jaw surgery may be used. Unfortunately, the success of these treatments is limited.

Traditional Chinese Medicine can be a great alternative. Acupuncture, moxibustion and electroacupuncture can be especially beneficial for people with TMD.

Numerous studies have shown acupuncture can reduce pain and inflammation caused by TMD. Acupuncture reduces the sensation of pain by directly stimulating the nerves, which changes the signaling to the brain. Acupuncture stimulates the release of neurotransmitters and endorphins in the body. These are naturally occurring substances that help decrease and block pain perception by the brain.

Placing acupuncture needles directly into the belly of the jaw muscle can also elicit a muscle twitch. This muscle twitch can then release the built up tension throughout the muscle, allowing it to reset. When the muscle tension is released, so too is the pain and tightness. By adding in electroacupuncture, the muscle is then reminded of how it is supposed to act.

Acupuncture is also proven to help reduce stress that is often associated with painful disorders like TMD. When people feel stressed, the brain releases a hormone called cortisol. Too much cortisol can alter the way the brain perceives pain, and it can also cause involuntary muscle spasms in the jaw muscles. This can lead to excessive pain in the temporomandibular joints.

If you or somebody you love is facing the pain of TMD, consider utilizing acupuncture and the other modalities of TCM to treat the issue. It is a much safer alternative, it can save a lot of money and these modalities offer improved overall health.



Food Do's & Don'ts for TMJ

When the discomfort in your jaw becomes too much to handle and you need a break from chewing but don't want to sacrifice flavor, **the following foods are the way to go.**

BONE BROTH

Being rich in minerals and vitamins, bone broth is an extremely nutritious non-solid food and is a healthy addition to any diet. It's a good source of protein, Vitamin C & A, B-Complex vitamins, potassium, iron and dietary fibers.

YOGURT

Not only is yogurt high in probiotics, it also accounts for 18% of the daily dose of potassium, 12% of magnesium, 49% of calcium (with a 1 cup serving) and 38% of phosphorus needs. These minerals help your bones and teeth stay healthy, and regulates your blood pressure and metabolism.

Top your yogurt with cinnamon and honey for added flavor.

FOOD TO AVOID WITH TMJ

CHEWING GUM

Although chewing gum may be a satisfying way to stave off hunger, aid with bad breath or even used to help with fidgeting, it's not a food that should be eaten if TMJ is a condition you're dealing with.

Chewing gum stretches your muscles and leads to an increase in the tension of the jaw and joint which can aggravate your already hindering symptoms.

BURGERS, BRATS & ALL THINGS BBQ

Avoiding foods that would often be found at BBQs such as corn, hard and crunchy chips, pickles, burgers and brats that would make you have to open your mouth wide will help you counter the negative effects of over-chewing.



© Copyright Acupuncture Media Works/AcuDownloads, All Rights Reserved. The information contained within the AcuNews newsletter is only used to educate and inform. This newsletter is not a substitute for the advice of a licensed and registered health care provider. Seek prompt attention for emergencies. Consult a health care provider for specific health concerns, and before starting a diet, cleanse or exercise routine.
Photo Credits: ©iStock.com/fotoVoyager, ©iStock.com/Nattakorn_Maneerat, ©iStock.com/YelenaYemchuk