



Grinding of Teeth

One word: bruxism. Also known as teeth grinding. A lot of people suffer from this disorder unknowingly, as it usually occurs during sleep. And, unless the constant racket of your grinding is keeping someone else awake, you may not think your sore jaw, restless sleep and general fatigue are symptoms of bruxism. Left untreated, it could lead to painful or loose teeth, or teeth that are literally ground down, leaving worn surfaces or fractured enamel. While CDA member dentists can usually detect the telltale signs of wear on your teeth, if you suspect you might have a grinding problem, be sure to mention it at your next visit. You and your CDA dentist can then determine the cause and appropriate treatment of your problem.

A major cause of bruxism is stress. Your CDA dentist may recommend that you wear a plastic mouth guard at night to prevent grinding. The custom-made guard keeps the upper and lower teeth from coming together, helping to relax your jaw muscles, and making it impossible for you to grind your teeth against one another. Your CDA dentist may also prescribe muscle relaxants or antiinflammatory medications.

If an abnormal bite, or crooked or missing teeth are causing you to grind, your CDA dentist may treat your bruxism by removing the high spots on the problem teeth. In more serious cases, he or she will reshape or reconstruct the biting surfaces of the problem teeth with crowns or inlays or may even suggest orthodontic treatment to establish a more functional bite.

If you want to get your grinding under control, talk to your CDA dentist. With the proper treatment, he or she can help alleviate the pain in your jaw, improve your sleep, and protect your teeth from abnormal wear.