

## **Informed Consent for Soft Guard Treatment due to Bruxism and Pulpitis**

Unfortunately, a patient can have many dental, medical and emotional problems all at once. It is not uncommon for patients with **bruxism** ( tooth grinding ) to have teeth that are sensitive to hot and cold. This is called **pulpitis** since the pulp ( nerves, blood vessels and connective tissues ) inside the teeth are inflamed and very sensitive. This sensitivity can sometimes become extreme and force the patient to seek immediate dental emergency care.

When the patient visits the dentist, many of the patient's teeth hurt. The dentist does not want to do multiple root canals and charge the patient thousands and thousands of dollars in dental fees since many of these teeth that are hurting only suffer with **reversible pulpitis**. It's called reversible since the pain can often go away later after the bruxism is treated. However, when your teeth are hurting, you want the dentist to do something right now to get rid of the pain.

Since the bruxism is usually the primary cause of the pain, our dentists prefer to treat the bruxism first with a soft guard and then wait to see how the painful teeth respond. In many cases, the teeth calm down and return to normal after a few weeks of soft guard therapy. If one or more teeth continue to constantly hurt with **irreversible pulpitis**, we then have to consider performing root canal therapy. Irreversible pulpitis does not reverse and continues to hurt.

Some patients become very frustrated and often get mad at the dentist. These patients feel that they were normal before this terrible pain and didn't have any temporomandibular symptoms. So they feel that the pain they are experiencing must be caused by a tooth and only a tooth should be treated. This is a chicken and egg problem. Which came first?

Subconscious bruxism and latent TMJ problems could have killed the tooth or teeth and now the pain from the tooth is making the TMJ problem much worse. However the reverse may be true. The tooth may have died, become infected and now the bone and ligaments around the tooth hurt which then causes the grinding to become worse. We just don't know the cause of the pain when you are seen for an emergency visit.

Our Atlanta Dental Group PC dentists prefer to initially treat the tooth grinding only but if the patient (you) insist upon having root canal therapy begun during your emergency visit, you may later need additional teeth treated. When a patient grinds, several teeth all hurt and it is hard to sort out if only one tooth is responsible for the pain.

**Permission to begin treatment**

I have read and understand the information contained within this consent form. An Atlanta Dental Group PC staff member has educated me and I understand that my condition has the potential to have later complications which may involve additional dental work.

If I choose to begin root canal therapy today, I know that other multiple teeth may also later require treatment involving additional costs.

If I choose to limit my treatment to bruxism ( grinding ) therapy, I understand that one or more of my teeth may later require root canal therapy and related dental work, also involving additional costs.

I give the doctors and staff at the Atlanta Dental Group PC permission to begin my care.

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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