

BRUXISM

Abrasion: Tooth wear caused by nighttime grinding

Stressed out by your fast paced life? Our dental practice sees evidence of it everyday.

Tooth wear. Sensitivity to heat and cold. Loosened teeth, fractures and debilitating headaches. Believe it or not, all this can occur while you sleep – from grinding your teeth. We call it bruxism.

As many as 90% of us grind our teeth each night, on average of five episodes per evening. Not everyone shows dental deterioration right away, depending on differences in enamel strength. The bite force, in any case, is so powerful – over 200 pounds per square inch - and the noise is fearful, you cannot physically duplicate this phenomenon when you're wide-awake. While you're sleeping, a lot of damage is being done.

Bruxing seems to be associated with the REM stage of sleep, when dreaming and rapid eye movement occur. There is some evidence that a bite out of alignment contributes to bruxing, but most agree stress is the problem.

Most people learn about a bruxing habit from the spouse who has to put up with the noise. More clues: waking up in the morning with sore jaw joints, muscle fatigue, or loose teeth.

Come see us for an evaluation. Our practice can relieve the damages of bruxism with a custom dental appliance. We also recommend physical therapy, sometimes muscle relaxants. The best solution, though: learning how to handle the stress in your life.