

Have you been under stress lately?

Solutions from the Michigan Head & Neck Institute



until your sleeping partner tells you so. Sleep apnea is easily recognizable. It's characterized by intense snoring followed by long pauses between breaths, then feverish gasps for air, a snort, and sometimes a sudden awakening. "While snoring alone isn't dangerous, sleep apnea is," says Dr. Klein. More than 200,000 Americans die from sleep apnea and related problems every year. Beyond that, it inflicts its sleepers with memory problems, depression, headaches, and weight gain. "Having sleep apnea is unpleasant, like awakening with PMS irritability every day of your life," Dr. Klein explains.

For those who have mild to moderate sleep apnea and haven't adapted well to the breathing mask (which many people find claustrophobic and uncomfortable), Dr. Klein fashions a special mouthpiece that realigns the jaw and secures

Are you experiencing headaches, some dizziness, or blurred vision? Perhaps you've been rationalizing that it's all in your mind and that you'll be fine when life settles down. Actually, the problem may not be "all in your mind," but in your head. Jaw-clenching and teeth-grinding are a body's way of adapting to stress, but they put added pressure on the delicate joints in your jaw. Headaches, dizziness, and blurred vision are some of the symptoms of temporomandibular joint dysfunction – TMJ. If you're experiencing a clicking in your jaw as you open your mouth to speak or chew, or if you feel a constant soreness in your facial muscles, it's very possible you already have some TMJ damage. Other symptoms include ear pain, buzzing or ringing in the ears, problems with equilibrium or balance, and/or discomfort in chewing or the locking of the jaw joint.

Internationally known professor Dr. Richard Klein serves as director of the Michigan Head & Neck Institute. He has seen a recent increase of TMJ due to stress from the economic situation in this region. Dr. Klein understands TMJ on a very personal level because he, too, is afflicted with it. This helps to explain why he has spent so much of his career addressing its causes, corrections, and pain relief. "Unfortunately, it's easy for TMJ to go undiagnosed because most doctors don't look for it during exams," he says. Sadly, when left untreated, time only contributes to the joint's deterioration.

The effects of TMJ can be far-reaching and can even render a person deaf, as Dr. Klein discovered during his initial experience with it 30 years ago. A new

patient arrived who had had a baby tooth extracted by a previous dentist. She was an 8-year-old girl who had developed hearing loss since her tooth extraction, even though an ear exam by an ENT specialist showed there was nothing wrong with her ear. Dr. Klein concluded that because the tooth had been removed, the patient had nothing to bite against as she chewed, displacing the alignment in her jaw. Once Dr. Klein straightened out her bite and realigned her joints, her hearing returned.

When TMJ affects the eyes, it's often because nearby muscles are stressed, contributing to an alteration of vision and possibly dizziness or uneven balance. Arthritis, accidents, or even a blow to the chin in your past can be responsible for TMJ, as well.

Treatment for the multiple symptoms of TMJ almost never involve surgery, if caught early.

When Dr. Klein travels to hospitals and universities around the world, such as The Prince Philip Hospital in Hong Kong and the Medical College of Beijing, he utilizes his expertise in sleep apnea and pain, in addition to his knowledge of TMJ. Sleep apnea occurs when the tongue falls backward in the throat and blocks the airway while sleeping. It has potentially deadly consequences if the sleeper doesn't awaken during an attack and breathe. Generally, the patient stops breathing for anywhere from 10 seconds to several minutes. Amazingly, this may happen as often as 100 times a night.

If you have sleep apnea, you may not know you have it until it's documented by a doctor – or

the tongue at night. It's discreet and travels easily; most insurance plans contribute to its cost.

If you have sleep apnea or TMJ, it's best to seek treatment early so you can lessen the potential for permanent TMJ damage or medical complications from sleep apnea such as stroke, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attack, ADD, or fibromyalgia. Dr. Klein's credentials put you in respected hands. He has treated more than 5,000 patients at the Michigan Head & Neck Institute, and has been appointed to the International College of Craniomandibular Orthopedics and the American Academy of Craniofacial Pain. Dr. Klein is also a consultant to the Beaumont Sleep Evaluation Services, and is a member of the American Dental Association and the National Head Injury Foundation. He serves as an Honorary Fellow in the Royal Society of Health in London, England. Dr. Klein looks forward to bringing you real relief.

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