

Teeth grinding?

Why a nightguard might be right for you



Occasional teeth grinding at night may not be a problem, but over time, consistently grinding your teeth can lead to some serious conditions, such as:

- Cracked teeth
- Tooth sensitivity
- Lost tooth enamel
- Gum or bone recession
- Jaw issues
- Exposed nerves

What is a nightguard?

Nightguards — also known as dental guards, mouthguards, occlusal guards, nocturnal bite plates or bite splints — are typically worn while sleeping. They relax the jaw and help prevent grinding by acting as a cushioning barrier between the teeth.

Types of nightguards

- Over-the-counter. You can buy nightguards from your local drugstore. These are most often made of soft plastic. They are usually the simplest and least expensive option, but they may not be very form-fitting or effective.
- Custom. You can ask for a custom-made nightguard from your dentist. Made in a

lab using an impression of your mouth, this type of mouthguard tends to be more comfortable and more form-fitting than a store-bought one. Check your plan details to confirm that nightguards (or occlusal guards) are covered.

How to tell if you need a nightguard

Stress may cause you to grind your teeth. Although you usually know when you're stressed, you may not always know if you're grinding your teeth at night.

Some signs of teeth grinding to watch out for include:

- Tooth sensitivity
- Gum recession
- Jaw clicking or popping
- Tight, achy jaw
- Facial pain
- Cracked teeth
- Fatigue
- Dull headache in the morning
- Teeth grinding or clenching during the day

If you think you might be grinding your teeth at night, tell your dentist. He or she can help recommend the best course of action.

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