

MUSCLES IN DENTISTRY



**Dentistry is about more
than just your teeth.
Learn more about the role
muscles play in dentistry.**

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Many individuals do not realize that muscles play an important role in dentistry. The science of Neuromuscular Dentistry (NMD) evaluates and treats your overall oral health by considering how your muscles, teeth and joints all work together.

HOW MUSCLES AFFECT YOUR OCCLUSION

Your jaw posturing muscles may be over-worked in attempting to maintain your present "programmed" position, even when you think they are relaxed. Head posture can also affect your occlusion and muscles that control head posture are primarily in the neck and upper back. Taken together, these conditions can lead to a variety of problems including a less than ideal bite, muscle pain or dysfunction, or jaw joint problems.

The Neuromuscular Dentist determines the jaw position that is associated with relaxed posturing muscles and adjusts or alters your occlusion (bite) to that position.

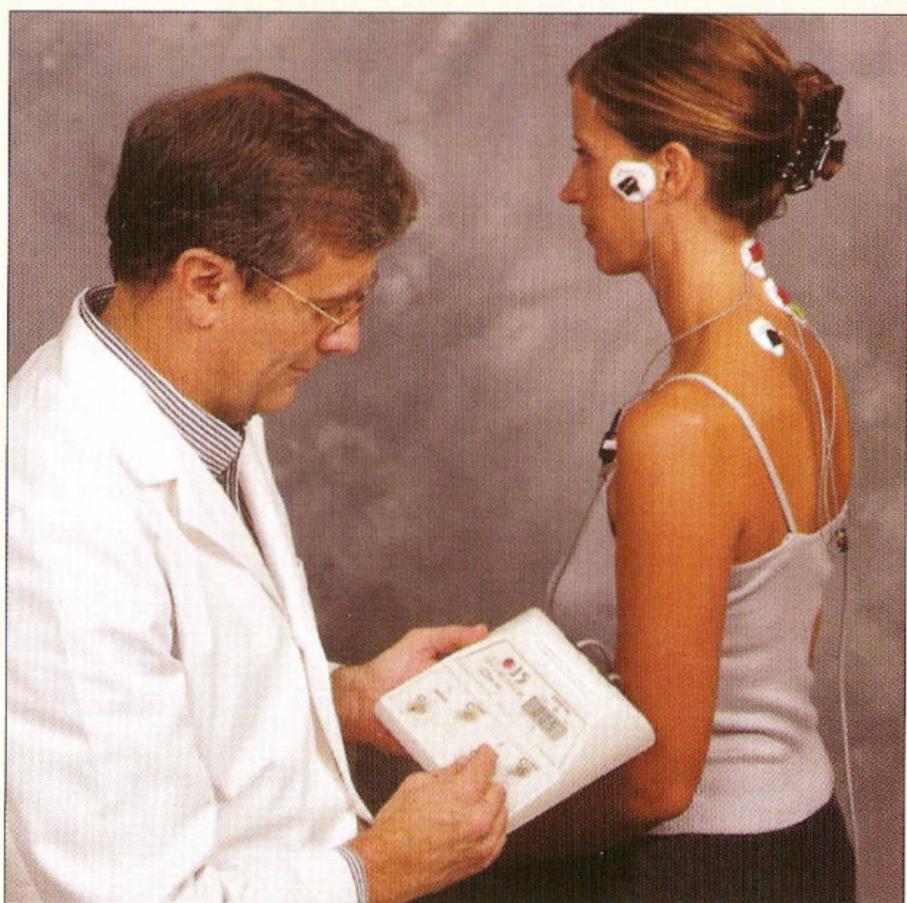
HOW THE MUSCLES ARE RELAXED

Because the muscles controlling the jaw are subconsciously "programmed" by the brain, most individuals have difficulty consciously reaching a truly relaxed state.

To help your muscles reach that relaxed state, a device called the Myomonitor is used to deliver gentle electrical stimulation to your muscles.

The Myomonitor is a battery operated electrical muscle stimulator. Mild electrical stimulation is delivered through adhesive patch electrodes attached over nerves that control specific muscle groups.





The virtually painless stimulus delivered by the Myomonitor will cause your facial and jaw muscles to twitch or pulse once every one and one half seconds. After about 40-60 minutes, this electrically induced "exercise" will allow your muscles to overcome their programming and go to a relaxed state. If there are indications that head posture may be affecting your occlusion, the dentist may also use the Myomonitor to stimulate and relax muscles in the neck and upper back.

GETTING THE BITE RIGHT

Now that your muscles are relaxed, the Neuromuscular Dentist will confirm and record the relaxed position of your jaw by placing a fast setting putty-like material between your teeth.

The doctor can now compare your usual occlusion (bite) with the relaxed jaw position to evaluate if your jaw is presently in a near optimal position and determine whether the occlusion should be adjusted.

HOME TREATMENT

The BNS-40, a small portable version of the Myomonitor, is available for home use. Your doctor may provide one or prescribe one for you. The BNS-40 is often prescribed for patients who may experience head or facial pain. If the cause of pain is muscle spasm, the home treatment unit may prove highly effective in breaking up the spasm and providing relief without the use of drugs. The BNS-40 may also be used to “pre-condition” your muscles before coming to the office, saving you and the doctor valuable time.



IS NEUROMUSCULAR DENTISTRY FOR YOU?

There are often options to consider when you are choosing dental treatment. After initially evaluating your situation, your dentist or treatment counselor will discuss those options with you. NMD becomes one of your options when or if you are contemplating aesthetic, cosmetic, reconstructive or orthodontic dental procedures.

Additionally, NMD techniques are used to treat patients that suffer from TMJ-like symptoms and to aid in establishing the occlusion for dentures. It is in these cases that establishing the optimal occlusion becomes so important.

This is when choosing neuromuscular techniques may have a substantial and positive impact on the outcome of treatment. The relaxed jaw position gives your dentist an added insight that may allow for a faster completion and improve final treatment results.

Feel free to discuss these options further with your dental professional to determine if Neuromuscular Dentistry is right for you.

What is Neuromuscular Dentistry?

To understand Neuromuscular Dentistry (NMD), it helps to first know a few things about your occlusion or "bite". Your occlusion is the way that your upper and lower teeth fit together. If your teeth do not fit together properly (misaligned bite), the muscles and joints accommodate – work to get them together. A misaligned bite often leads to muscles that are overworked when they should be relaxed, leading to various painful conditions.

Neuromuscular Dentistry (NMD) is a term applied to techniques that expand upon the traditional approach to dentistry and considers the entire system that controls the positioning and function of the jaw. The neuromuscular dentist seeks to establish a jaw position based on a harmonious relationship of the three main factors affecting occlusion – the teeth, muscles and jaw joints. The resulting jaw position is called the neuromuscular bite.