



Mr Glenn Watson

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Ear, Nose and Throat – Head and Neck Surgeon

CRANIOMANDIBULAR PAIN (TMJ DYSFUNCTION) A guide for Mr Watson's patients

During your consultation with Mr Watson, the contents of this pamphlet will be discussed. Reading this pamphlet in your own time will allow you to further understand your condition. If, after reading this pamphlet (also obtainable from Mr Watson's website), you do not understand, please make another appointment with Mr Watson so your questions may be further discussed.

Craniomandibular pain describes a pain disorder involving the muscles of the head, neck and face. It has a number of names which encompass the syndrome. It is also referred to as temporomandibular joint dysfunction where it affects predominately the jaw joints just in front of the ear and this pain commonly causes pain in the ear. Patients will often present to their doctor with ear pain in isolation. The diagnosis of an ear infection is sometimes made, but the condition does not get better when medication is provided for ear infections. As a result, the pain can occur in the patient despite all the clinical examination being essentially normal.

Most patients present with the common symptoms of:

- Pain in the jaw joint with clicking of the jaw joint
- Pain on opening the mouth or reduced mouth opening or pain in chewing
- Earache
- Toothache
- Headache pain or alternatively pain over the head, shoulder and neck regions

They may also complain of some general stiffness of the neck. Such pain sometimes then stimulates migraines in those patients that suffer from migraines. Many such patients also present with a history of teeth grinding or clenching teeth at night time. Some patients are unaware that they do this and are told by their dentist that there is evidence of this by erosion of the cusps of their molar teeth. Other less defined symptoms include general soreness type pains or alternatively throat pain and sometimes noise in the ear called tinnitus.

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Treatment

The treatment of myofascial pain is one of explanation as to the origin of the pain, as mentioned quite often when the doctor looks at various sites of the pain, the examination is normal. The treatment is usually conservative. Rarely are operative procedures done for this condition. The treatment aims at restoring muscle function and this can be done by relaxation exercises and physiotherapy exercises. Teeth splints are often provided via your dentist as these help greatly with the teeth grinding and hence the temporomandibular joint dysfunction. Sometimes medications can be provided to provide some relaxation of the muscle and hence the relief of symptoms. The aim is to provide conservative support treatment.

Please read this entire document carefully and if there is anything which is not understood, then Mr Watson would like you to reschedule another appointment with him to discuss your concerns or questions.

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