



spotlight on health

Putting The Bite On Chronic Headache Pain

(NAPSA)—Increasingly, a growing number of chronic headache sufferers are finding relief in an unexpected place: their dentist's chair.

America's Headaches

According to the National Headache Foundation, more than 45 million Americans suffer from headache pain severe enough to seek help from a physician. Approximately 28 million suffer from migraine headaches causing an estimated loss of 157 million workdays.

In many cases, this pain is caused by temporomandibular (jaw joint) disorder or TMD (commonly referred to as TMJ). TMD causes migraines and tension headaches, grinding of the teeth, breathing problems and sleep disorders, as well as facial pain, neck, shoulder and back pain, clicking or popping in the jaw and limited jaw movement.

This kind of headache pain—even long-term issues that were previously unresolved—can be alleviated without the use of painkillers thanks to the work of specially trained neuromuscular dentists.

"When your bite is not right, it can lead to chronic pain. Just like flexing your arm for a second is comfortable, but flexing it for two to three minutes starts to hurt, poor position causes muscle pain," says Dr. Mark Duncan, clinical director at LVI Global, a postgraduate dental training facility.



For many people with chronic headaches, a trip to the dentist may offer a solution.

Treating TMD

TMD is treatable. First, a specially trained neuromuscular dentist will perform a comprehensive evaluation, including a computer analysis of your jaw muscles, to find the jaw's optimal position.

Then, a jaw-repositioning orthotic—which looks like an athlete's mouth guard—will be used to temporarily maintain this new relaxed position. Patients often report pain they have endured for many years dissipates or goes away entirely in a matter of days.

Finally, a patient can be fitted with crowns and veneers to permanently hold the new pain-free jaw position.

According to Dr. Duncan, only 5 percent of the world's dentists are trained in neuromuscular dentistry. For more information and to locate a specially trained neuromuscular dentist near you, visit the Web site at www.leadingdentists.com.