

Experiencing Jaw Aches and Pains? - Creative Dentistry of Covington

TMJ is an acronym for the temporomandibular joint located on either side of your face at ear level



Covington, Georgia Jan 19, 2022 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - If you find yourself waking up throughout the night or in the morning with an aching jaw that often leads to headaches, that's a signal from your body to seek treatment from a [TMJ specialist near you](#).

If you're not familiar with the signs, symptoms, causes, and treatment for TMJ disorder from a **dentist in Covington**, we're happy to provide that information now at **Creative Dentistry of Covington**. But first, here's some information about what the acronym TMJ stands for.

What is a TMJ Disorder?

TMJ is an acronym for the **Temporomandibular Joint** located on either side of your face at ear level. It is the joint that connects the jaw's mobility to the stability of the skull.

Medical professionals have abbreviated the naming convention of the temporomandibular joint to TMJ for ease of reference. **Disturbances of this joint** that result in pain, discomfort, or limited movement are referred to as TMJ disorder.

TMJ disorder is a widespread and very treatable condition. It is estimated that more than **3 million cases** are diagnosed each year in the United States. The only treatment protocol for pain management was **drug therapy or surgical intervention** in the past.

However, with advancements in **modern dentistry**, including those used by [Dr. Anitha Reddy](#) at Creative Dentistry of Covington, patients can benefit from **drug-free, non-invasive treatment**.

Signs and Symptoms of TMJ Disorder

Signs and symptoms of the presence of a TMJ disorder vary from mild and moderately uncomfortable to the extreme and severely uncomfortable. Even if a patient's symptoms are mild, seeking medical attention is always recommended since untreated TMJ disorders can lead to dilated joints resulting in joint dislocation.

If you recognize any of the symptoms listed below, we encourage you to contact our [dental clinic in Covington](#) for early diagnosis and treatment.

- **Limited movement or mobility in the jaw**
- **Tenderness or aching in the jaw**
- **Headaches, including migraine headaches**
- **Tenderness and radiating pain around the ear**
- **Stiff jaw muscles**
- **Jaw joints that make a popping or clicking sound**
- **Jaw joints that seem to get stuck in position when yawning**
- **Misalignment between upper teeth and lower teeth**

These same symptoms are also associated with TMD, temporomandibular disorder, and bruxism. Since these conditions involve the jaw area, they can all be diagnosed and treated by a dentist near you.

Causes of TMJ Disorder

Knowing that a dentist can treat TMJ, TMD, and bruxism is helpful since the exact cause of the related discomfort is often challenging to pinpoint. In many cases, the disc associated with the disorder either **erodes or moves** from its proper alignment position.

Two other recognized causes of discomfort include damage to the **joint's cartilage** from arthritis or a previous trauma or impact event to the location. And last, individuals who clench their jaw or grind their teeth (either while sleeping or during times of stress) are at a higher risk of developing a jaw joint disorder.

Drug-Free Treatment for TMJ Disorder

Because the symptoms of jaw joint disorders often include pain, some individuals may think that the first

line of relief is to reach for an over-the-counter (OTC) pain reliever. In severe cases, they may look to **prescription pain relief**.

However, knowing that drug therapy is often the least preferred treatment for many patients, our **dental clinic in Covington** offers **drug-free treatment** with a dental appliance, also known as a splint.

The **TMJ Association** (TMJA) recognizes splints as the most common treatment for jaw joint disorders. They write that a splint should be considered the first step in treating TMJ-related disorders since it effectively relieves pain without drug therapy.

Dentists can design customized splints that address a patient's precise need for pain relief. These include:

- A stabilization or flat plane splint
- An anterior biteplane
- A nociceptive trigeminal inhibition tension suppression system (NTI-tss)
- A repositioning splint

You may be tempted to try an over-the-counter (OTC) splint that is marketed as relief for TMJ, but the TMJ Association writes that they are often inferior in their treatment for two reasons.

First, they do not provide the custom fit of a dental appliance, and second, they can cause teeth positioning changes that often lead to additional dental concerns such as gum disease.

Instead of taking risks with your oral health by using OTC appliances that are inferior in design or relying on drug therapy and its inherent concerns of side effects and addiction, dental splints from a dentist are an ideal first choice in treatment.

We know that our patients are unique individuals who deserve more than a one-size-fits-all treatment plan.

Our experience and technology make your **dental experience** more comfortable and more efficient. Your smile is important to us and so is being able to provide drug-free and surgery-free treatment for jaw-related disorders. Your smile is important to us and so is being able to provide drug-free and surgery-free treatment for jaw-related disorders.

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