

THE STICK TEST

Courtesy of Dr. Jeffrey L. Brown, DDS, Fellow AACFP

When a person has an issue with the jaw joint (temporomandibular joint), this means that the articular disc within the jaw joint may be out of position and this can cause serious problems such as jaw popping, headaches, and may even cause movement disorders. We try to identify if there is indeed such a dislocation at our first visit, but if you are one of our potential patients who might be travelling from a long distance (we have many patients who come here from other countries), then it might be worthwhile to try the tongue depressor test before you fly here. See the photo below:



I recommend you take 1-4 tongue depressors and put them across the teeth as in the above photo. Wait 5 minutes, then add another. Take your time doing this test because it may come in handy later on. Keep adding sticks to see if there is relief of headaches, ringing in the ears, movement issues, muscle spasms, or a marked decrease in your urge to tic. We have added up to 15 sticks, one at a time at 5 minute intervals, for some patients.

(NOTE: THIS IS FROM 2MM TO A MAXIMUM OF 23MM)

Determine what elevation of these sticks best alleviates your symptoms – it might be the urge to tic, it might be a headache that is reduced, ear ringing stops. your head straightens, your muscles stop pulling.. etc. If this ‘decompression’ of the nerves, blood vessels and tissues of the jaw joints does help, then we may be able to help you. Please try this technique first and let me know if it makes any difference. It is important that you understand there is NO DIAGNOSIS done over the phone or Internet. This is simply a guide to help you decide if it is worthwhile to travel sand further consider TMJ treatment. In addition, we are clear that there are no promises that any of our treatment will help your TMJ or other disorder(s). Once you begin treatment, it is imperative that you keep up with your appointments with us or else your progress will fail. You would need to plan on seeing our office every 2 months for about a year in order for the TMJ appliance to work properly. After that period of time, we will reassess your condition and go from there. In addition, we always require that you maintain contact with your physician during the course of treatment.

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