



The NTI Appliance

Frequently Asked Questions

R.S.Hendry DDS BSc
www.drhendry.ca

What is it for?



The NTI is a multi-purpose appliance. It was originally designed as an anti-clenching appliance, for jaw-related headaches and TMJ (jaw joint) pain. Surprisingly, it has also proven very helpful for reduction of migraine pain, which until recently was not thought to

be dentally-related. The NTI has been evaluated and approved for both jaw and migraine pain by the FDA in the U.S., and is similarly accepted by Health Canada for both purposes.

How does it work?

The appliance is a plastic piece that fits onto the front teeth, so that only those teeth contact when the jaws close. These teeth are equipped with a reflex that inhibits clenching of the jaw muscles - comparable to the reflex that makes your hand pull away instantly from a hot stove). As long as only the front teeth touch, clenching - and any pain that it causes - are substantially reduced. (You can demonstrate this yourself by feeling the jaw muscles beside your temples while you clench your teeth - and then repeating with a pencil between your front teeth).

Is this proven?

This is a new treatment, and there is not yet a large body of scientific evidence evaluating it. Clinical trials to date - including those of the FDA - found the NTI more effective than medication at preventing migraine pain.

How fast does it work?

That varies greatly. Some patients report some relief from symptoms after just one night, others (particularly migraine patients) will not see much improvement for several weeks. If you wish to have an NTI, be prepared to give it a chance for 2 full weeks of evaluation.

Is it guaranteed to work?

No. Jaw problems and migraine are persistent and difficult conditions to treat, and no treatment is guaranteed. However there is evidence that this appliance is more successful than most treatments, including drugs.

Are there any serious complications?

The main concern is swallowing or inhaling it if it becomes loose. The appliance should be tight enough that you need to use your hands to remove it. You must not wear an NTI if it becomes loose enough to come off in normal function - stop and call the office.

It is also possible that your bite may seem to change after wearing it for a period. The appliance cannot actually change your bite. If this happens it is because your bite really has been "off" all along, and separating the teeth prevents the muscles from compensating and allows you to feel the difference. This is similar to patients who have been born with one leg shorter than the other, and have leg or spinal problems without realizing it. If this happens it may indicate that bite adjustment or other treatment, possibly by a specialist

Do I need to wear it in the daytime?

For most jaw pain, nighttime use is enough. However migraine relief usually requires faithful use at night as well as a separate (smaller) daytime appliance.

Can I use it instead of a regular (horseshoe-shaped) nightguard?

NTIs are designed for jaw and headache pain, but they certainly prevent wear on the teeth, and can be worn instead of a conventional flat-plane nightguard if you think you would prefer that.

How much does it cost?

That depends on what it's being used for. As a replacement for a simple nightguard appliance, the fitting and adjustment are generally simple, and the fee is similar to a nightguard. When an NTI is used for jaw pain or tension headache, it will generally take more time, and the fee is higher. Appliances for jaw problems and headaches are generally not paid by dental plans.

Is more information available?

There is an NTI information page on our website at www.drhendry.ca. We have links to various media reports, as well as the NTI company's patient website - which has a wealth of information.