



DRE ST-HILAIRE, DR ÉTHIER-DA COSTA & ASS.

### MYOFASCIAL PAIN RELIEF INSTRUCTIONS

- o Use as recommended: Ibuprofen (Advil), Acetaminophen (Tylenol), or other pain medications, to decrease the level of discomfort. Your muscles can then be relaxed.
- o Apply moist heat to the painful area on your face using a hot water bottle of "baby" size wrapped in a warm damp towel, a heating pad or a hot compress, (20 minutes per application, 2 to 3 times per day). Moist heat is preferable because it is more penetrating.
- o Application of cold, ideally with a bag of "frozen peas" wrapped in a damp towel (10-15 minutes at a time, 2 to 3 times a day), followed by massaging the painful area. A bag of ice cubes or a bag of cooler sold in pharmacies are also acceptable.
- o Open your mouth as wide as you can avoiding pain and hold this position for 5 seconds (Popsicle sticks can be used to help hold the position), then close halfway. Hold this intermediate resting position for 5 seconds. Repeat this exercise 15 times. This set of exercises should be repeated every 8 hours until the mouth is opened about 3 fingers high.
- o If during the day you feel tension in the neck or if a headache occurs, stretch the posterior (back) muscles of the neck. Tilt the chin towards the center of the chest, keep the chin in this position and at the same time tilt the head to the side until tension is felt in the back part of the neck. Hold this position for 15 seconds. Then, repeat this exercise on the opposite side and hold the position also for 15 seconds. Finally, do the entire movement (left and right side) 5 times in a row.
- o Apply either the source of cold or heat to the base of the skull (cold: 10 to 15 min / hot: 15 to 30 minutes). Repeat as needed to decrease muscle tension or to control headache.
- o Keep your teeth out of contact and your jaw relaxed (check regularly every 10 minutes). Never keep your teeth in contact except when chewing or swallowing.
- o Do not overextend your muscles by opening your mouth or moving your jaw from side to side. Do not position the jaw forward or to the side.
- o Eat a soft diet. Avoid crunchy or crispy foods such as raw apples, raw vegetables, nuts, etc. Avoid gum or hard-to-chew foods such as steak, crusty bread, etc. Avoid overly opening your mouth by taking small bites. Avoid chewing gum.
- o Avoid habits such as biting cheeks or fingernails, or holding a pencil or other objects between the lips. Do not support the side of the head with your hand or fist.

- o Be sure to keep your shoulders down and relaxed (check every 10 minutes as needed).
- o To achieve optimal relaxation, take deep breaths, hold them for 2 to 3 seconds, then breathe out while releasing the tension in your shoulder and jaw area.
- o When possible, exercise daily; 30 minutes a day, 5 times a week. Low impact aerobic exercise is preferred.
- o In order to optimize your state of relaxation, avoid the caffeine in coffee, tea and certain soft drinks.
- o Exercises
  - Self-massage and neck stretching in the shower (stretching)
  - By placing a finger under the chin (without pressure), open and close slowly without advancing the jaw. Do not try to open to the maximum. Repeat 20 times, 2 to 3 times a day.
- o **Relaxation**
  - Hot baths
  - Relaxation (lessons, DVD)
  - Relaxing music
- o **Physiotherapy**
- o **Muscle relaxant:** Flexeril 5 mg ⇒ Take 1 tablet per day at bedtime
- o **Nightguard**
  - Day
  - Night
  - Upper jaw
  - Lower jaw