



## **FIVE THINGS TO DO AT HOME WHEN YOUR JAWS HURT**

### **Soft Diet**

- Switch to a **soft diet** (baby food, soups, milkshakes, eggs, hamburgers, etc.) until symptoms improve.
- Cut all food into **small** bite-size pieces. Do not open your mouth any wider than the thickness of your thumb. Avoid biting hard with your front teeth.
- Do not eat hard crusts of bread, tough meat, raw vegetables or any other food that requires prolonged chewing. **DO NOT CHEW GUM!!!**

### **Ibuprofen**

- Over the counter pain relievers (*Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil*) have an anti-inflammatory effect in higher doses. Take 600 mg every six hours to reduce joint inflammation.
- Read warnings and follow directions on the bottle. Do not use higher doses on an empty stomach, with alcohol or if you have stomach disorders (colitis, etc.).
- Do not use this dosage for more than 10 days.

### **Moist Heat**

- Moist heat is a very effective way to increase blood flow, which will promote healing, muscle relaxation and pain relief.
- Fill a basin with water as hot as the skin can stand and soak two hand towels in it. Take one out, wring it out and apply it to BOTH sides of the face, not just the painful side. When the first towel cools off, apply the second towel.
- This procedure should be carried out for 20 minutes, three times a day (or more), allowing at least a 20 minute interval between applications. Moist heat should be applied upon awakening and before going to bed at night.
- Moist heat packs (hydro-collars) or moist head pads (electric) are available at drugstores and are easier and more efficient to use.
- Use ice for acute injuries or if you don't respond well to heat or are uncomfortable using it, alternate heat and ice (10 minutes each).
- While applying the heat pack, it helps to lie down in a dimly lit room with no distractions in order to heighten the relaxation effect and **reduce stress.**