



BRUXISM

Is work or school stressing you out? You may be taking it out on your teeth through a condition called *bruxism*.

Bruxism is characterized by the grinding of the teeth and is typically accompanied by the clenching of the jaw. Researchers classify bruxism as a habitual behavior as well as a sleep disorder. Untreated, bruxism can lead to other health problems, damage to the teeth and gums, and even temporomandibular joint disorder (TMD).

The symptoms of bruxism vary and can include anxiety, stress, and tension; depression; earache; eating disorders; headache; insomnia; and a sore or painful jaw. If left untreated, bruxism eventually shortens and blunts the teeth being ground and can lead to facial muscle pain and TMD. In severe chronic cases, it can lead to arthritis of the temporomandibular joints.

Hint: The patient often becomes aware of the condition during a routine dental examination. Your dentist will be able to recognize the signs of bruxism and may even suggest further analysis of your bruxism.