

Health

Bite problems and how to overcome them

By Dr. Rick Borquez

Healthy biting patterns result in minimal tooth wear, teeth that are stable, and pain-free jaw, muscles and joints. Bite problems can result in chipped or worn teeth, loose teeth, or painful jaw muscles and/or joints.

The severity of bite problems is diagnosed by the amount of tooth wear, tooth looseness, and muscle and joint pain. Bite problems are often caused by misalignment of the teeth, constricted chewing pattern, or unbalanced tooth contact.

Worn teeth

With normal chewing, biting surfaces of teeth wear slightly during our lifetime. Bruxism (grinding of your teeth with greater force than normal) may result in excessive tooth wear. Bruxism can destroy healthy teeth and lead to sensitivity and eventual tooth loss.

Loose teeth

With normal chewing, bite forces do not cause teeth to become loose unless there is an infection or periodontal disease (bone loss).

Clenching or excessive biting forces can loosen teeth that have healthy bone. In addition, teeth that do not fit together properly may become loose during normal chewing. These conditions may lead to discomfort and premature tooth loss.

Muscle/joint pain

TMD is a collective term that describes clinical problems in the chewing muscles, temporomandibular

joints or both. It can elicit acute facial pain. TMD can be constant or intermittent and symptoms can vary greatly between individuals.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis for bite problems is based on difficulty chewing, worn teeth, changes with the position of your teeth over time, or pain in your jaw joints.

Prognosis

The prognosis can be assessed with a proper diagnosis and treatment plan. The prognosis varies based on the complexity of the bite problem.

Treatment options

- Diet modification
- Maintenance/reexamination
- Appliance therapy/ protection
- Functional analysis to deter-

mine definitive treatment plan.

- Rebuild teeth

Treatment recommendations

- Appliance therapy
- A nightguard is an acrylic splint designed to fit the upper and lower teeth, and minimize any excessive forces on the jaw muscles and joints.

Functional analysis

A functional analysis is a multistep procedure that provides diagnostic information to analyze your bite. The following steps may be part of your functional analysis:

- Diagnostic impressions
- Facebow records
- Bite records
- Photographs

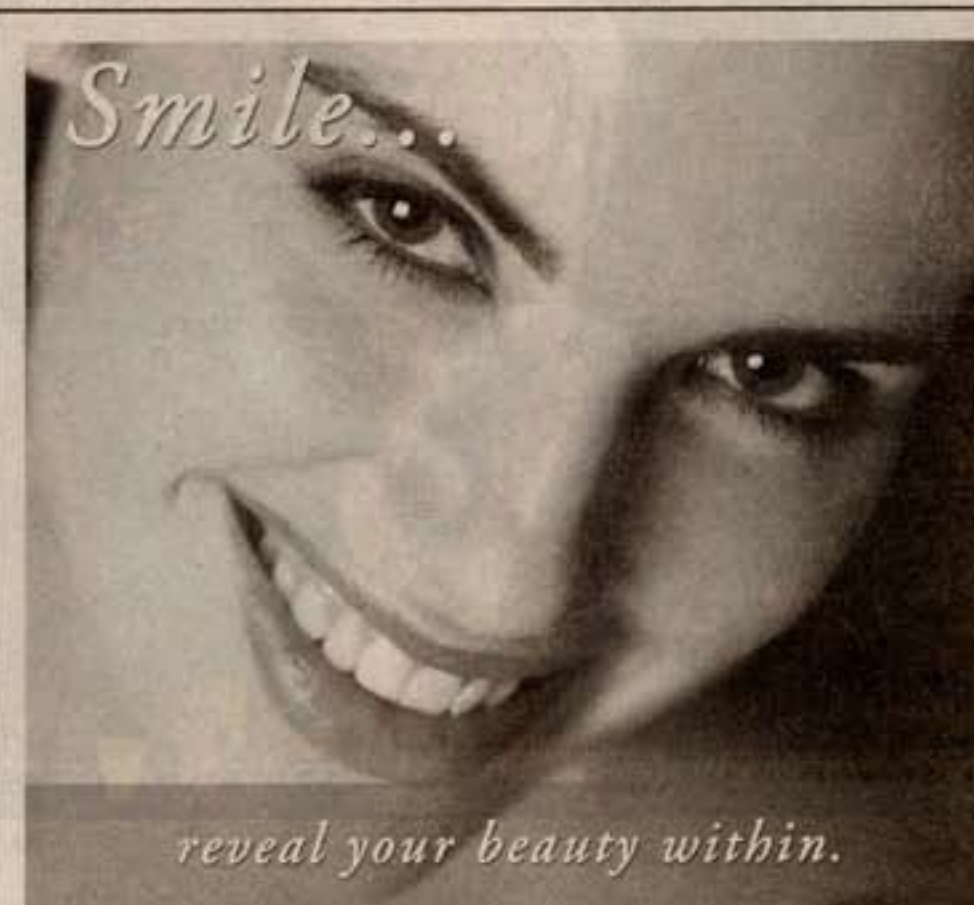
After analysis of your bite problems, a custom treatment plan will be

developed and presented to you.

Bite problems are often ignored prior to cosmetic dental treatment which can result in breakage of the new restorations. It is very important that any bite problems be treated prior to any dental treat-

ment to ensure the longevity of your new restoration.

Dr. Borquez is a member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. He will be relocating his practice to the new Spring center. His practice emphasizes advanced cosmetic and restorative dentistry. He can be reached at (805) 529-1000 or www.borquezdental.com



Did you know that virtually all adults (99.7%) believe a smile is an important social asset? An array of options are available from AACD member dentists to give you the smile you have always desired. Teeth whitening, life-like porcelain veneers, and natural, tooth-colored restorations are just a few of the choices you have today thanks to advancements in modern cosmetic dentistry.

For your smile consultation, contact:

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