



After Care – Night Guard

Tooth grinding during sleep—bruxism—can be caused by stress and anxiety. More frequently, though, it is the result of an abnormal bite or missing or damaged teeth. If not addressed, grinding your teeth can cause them to break or loosen, making them more likely to become infected or damaged so much they require removal. In some cases, tooth grinding causes (or worsens) TMJ.

To help prevent tooth damage, Dr Welch often prescribes the use of a night guard for people who experience nighttime tooth grinding. While there are over-the-counter mouth guards, we typically recommend a custom-fit night guard for the best results and least discomfort. Once an impression is made of your teeth, a custom polymer mouth guard is made. Most patients find that regular use of their night guard significantly improves their symptoms and protects their teeth and jaw.

To Care for Your Custom-Fitted Night Guard:

- **Wash the night guard after every wearing** with water or mouthwash and dry it before closing in its case.
- **At least once a week, brush your mouth guard** gently with toothpaste or mild soap, then rinse and dry.
- **At least once a week, clean your mouth guard case** with soap and water.
- **Keep your night guard in its case** when you are not wearing it.
- **Don't store your night guard in the bathroom.** High humidity may cause it to warp and/or get mildewed.
- **Check your mouth guard periodically for damage.**
- **Bring your mouth guard with you when you come for your semi-annual checkups** with Dr. Welch so we can check it for you.

Proper care of your nighttime mouth guard will ensure that it lasts as long as possible, doesn't cause infections or discomfort, and can do its job of protecting your teeth.

Give us a call today if you have any questions about how to wear or care for your night guard, or if you are concerned that your mouth guard may be damaged.

