TMJ Instructions
Conservative Instructions for Jaw Trauma & Joint Pain

Soft Diet: By eating a soft diet you will allow the TMJ including the chewing muscles an opportunity to rest and heal. This is a partial list of soft foods that you can eat:

- Soup
- Jell-O
- Fish
- Pudding
- Milkshakes
- Cottage Cheese
- Scrambled Eggs
- Mashed Potatoes
- Steamed Vegetables
- Yogurt

Avoid foods such as steak, bagels, caramel candy, or any foods that require excessive chewing. DO NOT CHEW GUM OR ICE.

It is recommended to chew your food on both sides at the same time (or alternate sides, 5 chews on left, then 5 chews on right) to reduce strain on one side.

Some people’s symptoms go away after two or three weeks on a soft-food diet. Others will need to follow it for a longer time.

Moist Heat and Exercise: you will find moist heat to the side of the face will help relax tight and spasming muscles that may be causing pain. Use a warm washcloth to the side of the face over the TMJ for 5 minutes per side. Follow this with gentle massaging of the TMJ with fingertips for 1 minute per side. This should be done in the morning and evening before bedtime. A simple stretching exercise should also be included, following these simple steps.

1. Put your left thumb under your upper front teeth.
2. Put your right index and middle fingers on top of your lower teeth.
3. Gently pull the jaw apart using your hands, not your jaw muscles
4. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat 5 times.

Tips for Pain Relief: Yawn and chew as little as possible and avoid extreme jaws movements. Prolonged dental treatments should also be avoided until the pain has been reduced. Don’t rest your chin on your hand or hold the telephone between your shoulder and ear. Try to remember to keep your teeth slightly apart as often as you can (don’t clinch). It is natural for your jaw to open a little if your lips are closed.