

## Nocturnal Bruxism

The English 301 Definitions Assignment is designed to teach the students 3 different methods of writing a definition for a specialized term from our area of study or profession. This document will give an example of a parenthetical definition, a sentence definition and an expanded definition of a dental condition in layman terms for the novice reader. I have chosen “nocturnal bruxism” since this is a common dental condition observed in my clinical practice.

### Specialized term

Nocturnal Bruxism

### Parenthetical Definition

Nocturnal bruxism (the clenching and grinding or gnashing) of one’s teeth during sleep.

### Sentence Definition

Nocturnal bruxism is the involuntary clenching and grinding of one’s teeth during sleep. This oral habit is characterized by the squeezing together of the upper and lower jaws, along with the side to side and/or the backward and forward movements.

### Expanded Definition

The dental term “nocturnal bruxism” is made up of 2 words. The first word, nocturnal is an adjective that describes when this condition takes place. Nocturnal comes from the Late Latin *nocturnalis*, and from the Latin *nocturnus* meaning belonging to the night or during sleep. (Definition of nocturnal, 2018) The second word, Bruxism, comes from the Greek *brukhein* meaning the gnashing of teeth. (Definition of bruxism, 2018). The chewing surfaces on the teeth grind against each other as the jaw moves from side to side and backwards and forwards. The teeth can start to look flattened, shortened, chipped and cracked. These are some of the signs of more than normal tooth wear. This night time mouth habit also involves the squeezing of the lower jaw into the upper jaw. clenching action



Figure 1: Clenching and Grinding  
Source: <http://www.dentagama.com>

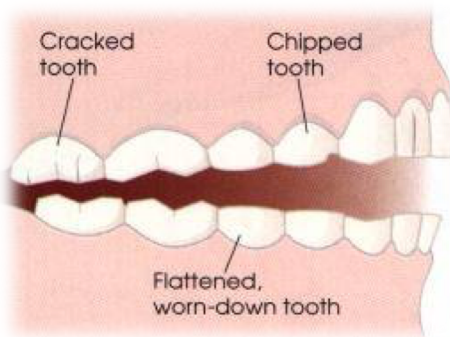


Figure 2: Flattened, chipped and cracked teeth. Source: <http://www.dentistryfortheentirefamily.com>

### What can cause clenching and grinding?

Some of the causes for teeth grinding and clenching include stress, anxiety, missing teeth, crowded teeth and sleep disorders.

### What can happen from clenching and grinding?

- Teeth are chipped and/or worn down
- Teeth appear short and flattened
- Teeth hurt and seem loose
- Others telling you they hear the grinding sounds at night
- Frequent headaches or pain near the ear
- Sore achy jaw and face muscles
- Grinding, popping and clicking sounds in the jaw joint (Singh, 2015)



Figure 2: Symptoms of bruxism

Source: Adapted from The Cerezen Team

<https://www.cerezen.eu/blog/tell-tale-signs-that-you-grind-your-teeth-while-sleeping>.

### What can be done?

The goal of treatment for nighttime clenching and grinding is to protect the teeth and the gums from damage and wear. Learning ways to reduce or limit stress and anxiety, learning methods of changing behavior and wearing a mouth guard when sleeping can all help decrease the amount of clenching and grinding someone does during their sleep (Darby & Walsh, 2010).



Figure 3: Example of a night guard

Source: [http:// www.mouthguardsforteethgrinding.com](http://www.mouthguardsforteethgrinding.com)

### References

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