

ORAL APPLIANCE FOR SLEEP APNEA

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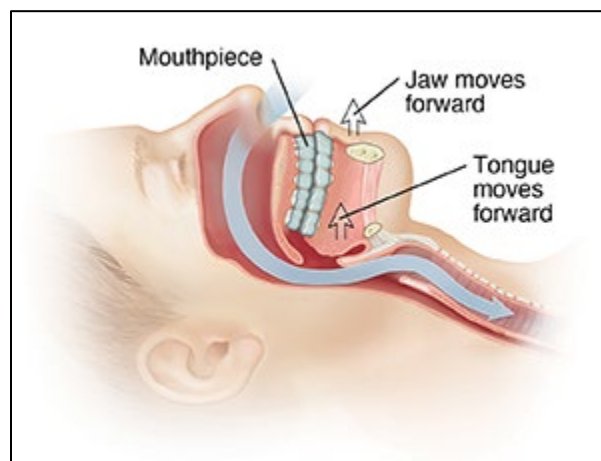
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What is an oral appliance?

An oral appliance is an alternative treatment for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). It is similar to a mouth guard and it is worn during sleep. It is an option for people with mild to moderate sleep apnea or for those who struggle with PAP therapy.

How does the oral appliance work?

It works by gently moving the lower jaw forward. This will move your tongue forward and prevent it from falling back and blocking your airway. It is custom made and adjustable. You will be referred to the sleep specialist to evaluate whether or not oral appliance therapy is right for you.



What should I expect if I am referred for oral appliance therapy?

The sleep specialist will refer you to a Community Care sleep dentist (provider outside the VA) who is board certified by the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine. The sleep dentist will discuss the process with you and will take impressions of your upper and lower teeth in order to make the device. There are different types of oral appliances. The sleep dentist will determine what will work best for you.

Once you receive the appliance, it is expected that you will use it every night for the entire duration of your sleep. You will be instructed on how to slowly adjust the appliance. The goal is to find a comfortable setting that will improve your sleep apnea symptoms. After a few months of adjusting and wearing the device every night, you will need to have a sleep study while wearing the oral appliance. This is to make sure your sleep apnea is being adequately controlled.

Is it right for everyone?

An oral appliance will treat obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) but not central sleep apnea. It is ideal for patients with mild or moderate OSA, but may also be tried in patients with severe OSA. Since the appliance uses your natural teeth for support, you need to have about 6-7 healthy lower teeth to be a good candidate. Some patients will have jaw discomfort from the therapy. This treatment may not be good for patients with chronic jaw issues (e.g. TMJ/temporomandibular joint concerns). In extreme cases, it may cause teeth movement, especially if you do not have healthy teeth.