



**WEBER CHIROPRACTIC OFFICE, S.C.**  
*Making a difference in the quality of people's lives*  
Gentle Chiropractic Therapy – Acupuncture – Rehabilitation



## What's a TMJ?

TMJ stands for **temporomandibular joint** or the jaw joint – the joint that allows you to open and close your mouth. It lies just in front of your ear and can be responsible for a variety of symptoms. These include: facial pain, pain up the side of the head, headaches, ear pain or fullness, neck pain, biting the cheek, popping or cracking when eating, and not opening wide enough to eat a bratwurst.

Some of the **suspected causes** of TMD (temporomandibular dysfunction) are extensive dental work with prolonged jaw opening, general anesthesia with intubation (tube down windpipe to breathe during surgery), whiplash from motor vehicle crashes, sleeping wrong or simply opening the mouth. I have certainly seen all of these in practice and they can occur very rapidly and without warning. The pain can be subtle and aggravating or it can be very acute and severe and, as I said above, can come in many different forms.

**Movement within the TMJ is quite complex** and is affected by muscle balance, individual bone shape and a movable disc that slides when you open and close the mouth. Examination involves measuring the patient's ability to open more than 30 mm (about three fingers), evaluating each side of the jaw for symmetrical movement on opening and closing and determining areas of tenderness (joint and muscles). In addition to these tests, Activator Methods has developed an evaluation that measures six different potential dysfunctions of movement that can greatly influence how this joint functions. Examination of the skull and neck are necessary as TMJ can be part of a regional problem.

**Treatment** over the years has followed many approaches including surgery which really doesn't have good results and is seldom used. **Activator Methods Protocol for the TMJ** (using the Activator instrument we have in the office – "the clicker") involves very, very gentle manipulation of the joint to correct the dysfunctions and to help restore the joint to normal function. This approach has been studied in conjunction with the **University of Iowa College of Dentistry** and was shown to be effective in managing this complex problem. In addition to the manipulation of the joint, we frequently use **low level laser therapy** to quickly reduce pain and inflammation. We also work on the surrounding muscles to reduce spasm. At times, coordination of care with a dentist is needed if bite or occlusal problems exist and bite splits are needed to separate the joint to decrease the stress of teeth grinding. We have seen great results with this condition. It's very rewarding to see someone get to enjoy that bratwurst once again.

## Economics of Health Care

With the price of gas and the price of conventional health care ever rising, I hope the **value of the chiropractic approach** to many of those aches and pains is obvious. Many times, it **only takes a few visits** to remedy an ailing back or that stiff neck and can not only make you feel better but doesn't cost you an arm and a leg. At our office, we look at a patient's problem from many different viewpoints - chiropractic, rehabilitation and simple correction of the way people move - and **combining these approaches allows us to quickly isolate** the problem and correct them. A case in point – 57 year old female who had seen two chiropractors, an orthopedic surgeon, received injections from another physician and had physical therapy, but still couldn't bend over. When I showed her how to bend at the hips, she got a big smile on her face stating that was the first time in two years she could comfortably bend her knees and bend forward at the waist.

## Wellness Tip

Hydration or fluid intake is very important in maintaining a normal internal environment within our bodies and to rid our bodies of toxins through the kidneys, the bowel and sweat glands. Fluids should be in the form of purified water or teas. Sodas, coffee and flavored beverages can actually cause dehydration. To calculate how much fluid you should consume during a day, take your weight, divide by 2 and that is how many ounces of appropriate fluid you should be drinking. Whenever I feel sluggish about mid afternoon, I realize I'm not drinking enough and quickly reach for my water bottle.

*Again, thank you for being our patient!  
We appreciate you and look forward to serving you.*

**David J. Weber, D.C., D.A.B.C.O.**

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