



# IS YOUR BITE RIGHT?

Do you suffer from headaches, ringing in the ears, hot & cold sensitivity of the teeth or clicking and popping of the jaw? If so, your dentist may be able to help. Many of these symptoms can be related to a person's bite or occlusion.

Your bite is the position of your jaw when your teeth come together. When it is changed or altered it can affect your health in many ways. Your gums may recede, your teeth may wear and chip and become more sensitive to hot or cold, you may suffer from joint pain or head and neck pain. Even conditions such as migraines and vertigo can be attributed to your bite not being in proper alignment. Several studies have concluded that up to 90% of head and neck pain can be due to misalignment of the teeth.

As we bring our teeth together to swallow, chew and function hundreds of times throughout the day, even the slightest discrepancy in your bite can lead to pain in your teeth and muscles. Traditional dentistry assumes that the current position of your bite is right for you. This may not be the case. Although your existing bite can be used often with acceptable results, there are many instances in which the treatment you receive may leave you with results that are not functional or comfortable.

Neuromuscular dentistry is the practice of establishing a harmonious relationship between the teeth, the muscles of the head and neck, and the jaw joint. It is practiced by dentists hoping to alleviate the pain and discomfort currently being experienced by many of their patients. Using his or her knowledge of neuromuscular principles, your dentist can determine whether your teeth are aligned properly.

Your bite is evaluated by a thorough examination, which includes x-rays and models of your teeth. If your bite is not in its correct position, your dentist can then determine your optimal jaw position using advanced technologies such as the TENS unit and the K7 jaw tracking device. Ultimately, retainer-like devices called orthotics are used to gradually bring your jaw into its natural position over the course of several months. Once the bite is corrected and any pain or discomfort is addressed, you can move forward with enhancing your smile.

Having your bite evaluated by your dentist is a great way to screen for many of the problems discussed. Moreover, taking care of any bite issues prior to completing any major dental treatment can help ensure that the results last.