A night guard protects your teeth.

Grinding is hard to notice yourself, and clenching can be silent, so "I don't grind" isn't reliable.[1] Grinding itself is common; the problem is force beyond what your teeth and jaw can take.[2]

Two kinds of grinding

While asleep

Not only grinding the teeth together, but also silent clenching, biting down hard without a sound.[1]

While awake

Includes the habit of keeping the upper and lower teeth lightly touching, at work or while looking at a phone.[1]

~20 min a day

How long upper and lower teeth normally touch, even counting meals and talking[1]

Signs in the mouth

None of these alone proves you grind

Tense jaw muscles

Tension or tenderness in the cheek muscle that bulges when you bite[1]

Worn teeth

Tooth tips that should be rounded are worn flat[1]

Bony bumps (tori)

Bony lumps inside the lower jaw or in the middle of the palate

Tooth marks

A scalloped tongue edge, or marks inside the cheeks

Notches at the gumline

Not decay, but the tooth is worn away where it meets the gum

Signs you can notice yourself[1]

- ☐ Tired, achy or sore jaw on waking
- ☐ Family has heard you grind
- ☐ Tooth marks on your tongue or cheeks

By the time it hurts, damage is often done

- With heavy grinding forces, back-tooth fillings failed mainly by **fracture**[3]
- People aware of clenching or grinding more often had pain or sensitivity in cracked teeth[4]
- Sleep grinders reported sensitive teeth in **62%** of cases (vs 36% without)[5]
- Grinding is considered one cause of jaw joint problems (TMD)[1]

What a night guard can and can't do

Can

It may protect teeth and fillings from grinding forces and ease strain on the jaw joint.[1] Covered by health insurance in Japan.[6]

Can't

Cure grinding. With long-term use, grinding returns to its previous level[1]; there isn't enough evidence it works as a treatment.[7]

Don't forget it

Keep it where you'll **always see it before bed**, such as next to your toothbrush

From your clinic A clinic stamp is fine for contact details

Phone _____ **Hours** _____ **Notes** _____

Signs ☐ Jaw muscles ☐ Wear ☐ Tori ☐ Tooth marks ☐ Gumline notches

Today ☐ Night guard impressions ☐ Night guard fitted ☐ Watch for now

Next visit ☐ Fitting ☐ Check ☐ Check-up Date: Time:

References [1] Japan Dental Association. Theme Park 8020: Bruxism (by Kubota H). [2] Lobbezoo F, et al. J Oral Rehabil. 2018;45(11):837-844. [3] van de Sande FH, et al. J Dent Res. 2013;92(7 Suppl):78S-83S. [4] Hilton TJ, et al. J Am Dent Assoc. 2017;148(4):246-256.e1. [5] Ommerborn MA, et al. J Prosthet Dent. 2007;98(2):150-158. [6] Shirobon.net. Dental fee schedule (2026), I017 Intraoral appliance. [7] Macedo CR, et al. Occlusal splints for treating sleep bruxism (tooth grinding). Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2007;(4):CD005514.

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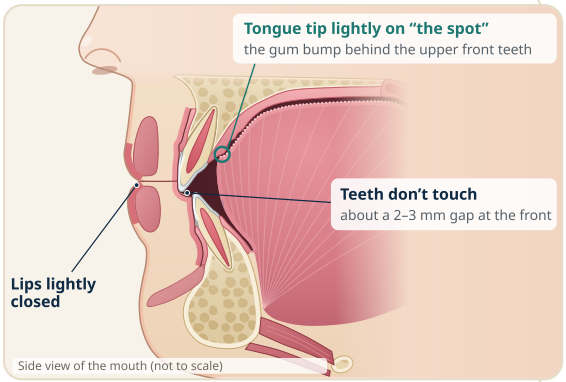
Daytime clenching: set up reminders.

First, know what a relaxed mouth feels like



1. **Lips lightly closed**
2. **Upper and lower teeth not touching**, with a 2–3 mm gap at the front teeth[1]
3. **The tip of the tongue lightly touches the bump of gum just behind the upper front teeth**
   This is called "the spot." Don't press hard; it's just a place to rest the tongue lightly

Most important: **keep your teeth apart and relax your jaw.**

Reminders to keep your teeth apart

Noticing more often is the first step

Write it

Put "teeth apart" on the edge of your monitor or your phone's lock screen

Set alarms

Set reminders a few times a day and check whether your teeth are touching

If they're touching

Keep your lips closed, part your teeth and relax your jaw

Nighttime grinding: protect, don't try to stop

Willpower can't stop it, so let a night guard protect

Things that may be involved[1] Stress / alcohol and smoking (avoid drinking before bed, quit smoking) / sleep problems (such as breathing problems during sleep) / some medicines (such as some antidepressants; **don't stop on your own, ask the prescribing doctor**)

Common myths

Myth **"Adjusting the bite by grinding the teeth will cure it."** There is no scientific evidence that the bite causes grinding, and this idea has been rejected.[1] Grinding down healthy teeth is not recommended.

Myth **"Botox will stop it."** It weakens biting force, but evidence that it reduces grinding itself is weak.[8][9] The effect wears off in a few months[8], and it isn't covered by insurance in Japan.[10]

When to see a dentist

By the time symptoms appear, a tooth may already be cracked

See a dentist soon if

- a **tooth chipped**, or a filling or crown broke or came off
- a tooth **hurts when you bite**, or is **sensitive** to cold[4][5]
- you wake with a **sore jaw or cheeks**, can't open wide, or your jaw clicks[1]
- family has heard you grind

If you **snore loudly** or feel **very sleepy** during the day, breathing problems during sleep may be involved. Consider **seeing a doctor** as well.[1]

Clinic contact (stamp is fine)

Notes

References ([1]–[7] on page 1)

[8] Chen Y, et al. Effectiveness of Botulinum Toxin Injection on Bruxism: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. Aesthetic Plast Surg. 2023;47(2):775-790. [9] Val M, et al. Effects of Botulinum Toxin Injection on Masticatory Muscle Activity in Sleep Bruxism: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. J Clin Med. 2026;15(18):7179. [10] GlaxoSmithKline. Botox for injection 50 and 100 units, package insert (Japan).

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