# 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.

**Written by a practising dentist (Zubora Ha Lab, Japan) · November 2026 edition**

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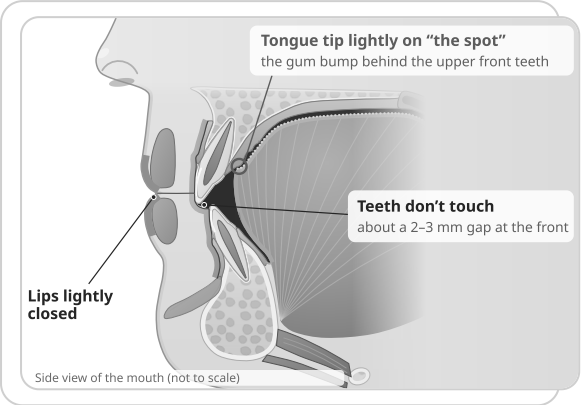
# Daytime clenching: set up reminders.

## 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
- you wake with a **sore jaw or cheeks**, can't open wide, or your jaw clicks[1]
- a tooth **hurts when you bite**, or is **sensitive** to cold[4][5]
- 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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