

# Your Journey with Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction



For more information scan this QR code or go to [myhealth.alberta.ca/tmj-dysfunction-pathway](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/tmj-dysfunction-pathway)

**Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction is the name given to various conditions that can cause pain, clicking or movement problems around your jaw and the muscles surrounding it.**

You are the most important part of your healthcare team. This guide will help you know what to expect and how to prepare as you and your healthcare team work together to manage and treat your TMJ dysfunction. If you have any questions along the way, please ask your healthcare team.

## Before your appointment

- Write down how you feel, and your questions, symptoms, and concerns.
- Symptoms may include pain or tenderness of your jaw, ear pain, headaches, joint sounds, trouble with fully opening your mouth, and jaw locking.



## Visit your healthcare provider

- Consider bringing a family member or friend to support you.
- Share all of your symptoms and concerns. Your health includes physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social elements.
- In order to better manage your health condition, your healthcare provider needs to hear from you and understand who you are and what matters to you.



## Get your assessment & tests

- Your healthcare provider may measure how much you can open your mouth, check how you bite, and will feel your jaw and face.
- In most cases, you will not need additional tests unless you are being referred to a specialist.



## Review your assessment & test results

- Find your test results on MyHealth Records or MyAHS Connect ([myhealth.alberta.ca/myhealthrecords](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/myhealthrecords)).
- Talk with your healthcare provider so you know what your test results mean.



## Review your treatment & management options

- There are many ways to treat and manage TMJ dysfunction. Talk with your healthcare team to determine what is best for you, such as:
  - **Jaw rest**
    - No chewing gum
    - Have a soft or altered diet
  - **Stress reduction**
    - Hot/cold therapy
    - Self-massage
  - **Dental appliance or night guard**
    - See a dentist for a proper assessment and fitting
  - **Medicine**
  - **Physiotherapy**
  - **Massage therapy**



## Talk with your healthcare provider about a referral

- Not all patients need a referral to see a specialist.
- A referral is determined based on your symptoms and history. In most cases, you will need to try some of the management options for at least 3 months before being referred to a specialist.



## Start your treatment & watch your symptoms

- **Call 811 or go to an emergency room** if your jaw is locked open or shut.



## Keep taking care of yourself

- Take an active role in your treatment.
- Write down any new symptoms.
- Look for other healthy lifestyle resources and supports.



Whole-person health

### Important Tips:

#### Need a family doctor?

[ahs.ca/findadoctor](https://ahs.ca/findadoctor)

#### Need a translator?

Let your healthcare provider know

#### Need health advice?

Call Health Link at 811

#### Need to find programs and services in your community?

Call 211 or visit [ab.211.ca](https://ab.211.ca)