

Understanding Teeth Grinding in Children and Effective Treatment Approaches

Neda Vis*

Department of Prosthetic Dentistry, University of Sulaimani, Sulaimani, Iraq

DESCRIPTION

Teeth grinding, clinically known as bruxism, is a common oral habit observed in children that involves the grinding, clenching, or gnashing of teeth. While it can affect individuals of all ages, it is particularly prevalent in children. Although often considered a harmless behavior, persistent teeth grinding can lead to various dental and health issues, making it crucial for parents and caregivers to be aware of its causes, effects, and available treatment options.

Teeth grinding in children can stem from a variety of factors, both physical and psychological. It's important to note that some degree of bruxism can be a natural part of a child's development, especially when primary teeth are emerging or when they're adjusting to changes in their bite. However, chronic teeth grinding can be attributed to stress, anxiety, malocclusion (misalignment of teeth), and airway issues like sleep apnea. Children who have certain developmental disorders like cerebral palsy may also be more prone to teeth grinding.

While occasional teeth grinding may not cause significant harm, persistent bruxism can lead to a range of dental and health problems. The constant grinding can wear down the enamel, leading to tooth sensitivity, pain, and even fractures in extreme cases. It can also affect the jaw joint, leading to Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMJD), which results in jaw pain, headaches, and difficulty in opening and closing the mouth. Moreover, the pressure exerted during grinding can impact the surrounding tissues, causing discomfort in the face and ears.

Treating teeth grinding in children involves a multi-faceted approach that addresses the underlying causes and manages the symptoms. Here are some effective treatment strategies: If stress or anxiety is contributing to the bruxism, helping children manage their emotions through techniques like relaxation exercises, deep breathing, and engaging in calming activities can

be beneficial. In cases where misaligned teeth are causing grinding, orthodontic treatment may be recommended to properly align the teeth and correct the bite. Dentists often prescribe custom-made night guards or splints that children can wear during sleep. These devices create a protective barrier between the upper and lower teeth, preventing them from grinding against each other and reducing the negative effects of bruxism. For children who engage in teeth grinding during waking hours, behavioral interventions can be helpful. Parents and caregivers can help children become aware of the habit and encourage them to avoid it consciously.

If bruxism is linked to sleep disorders such as sleep apnea, addressing the sleep issue can significantly reduce grinding. Treatment of sleep apnea may involve lifestyle changes, positional therapy, or using devices like Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines. Routine dental check-ups are essential to monitor the child's oral health and assess the impact of teeth grinding. Early detection can prevent more serious dental problems from developing. Parents play a vital role in managing teeth grinding in children. Providing a supportive environment, maintaining a regular bedtime routine, and promoting a healthy lifestyle can all contribute to reducing bruxism. Teeth grinding in children is a common occurrence that often arises from a combination of physical and psychological factors. While occasional grinding may not be a cause for concern, chronic bruxism can lead to dental and health issues that require attention. Parents and caregivers should remain vigilant, identifying the potential causes of teeth grinding in their children and seeking appropriate treatment. By addressing the underlying factors and adopting effective treatment strategies, it is possible to alleviate the negative effects of bruxism and promote a healthy oral environment for children. Regular dental care, communication with healthcare professionals, and a holistic approach to managing bruxism will contribute to the overall well-being of children and their dental health.

Correspondence to: Neda Vis, Department of Prosthetic Dentistry, University of Sulaimani, Sulaimani, Iraq, E-mail: nedavis@gmail.com

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