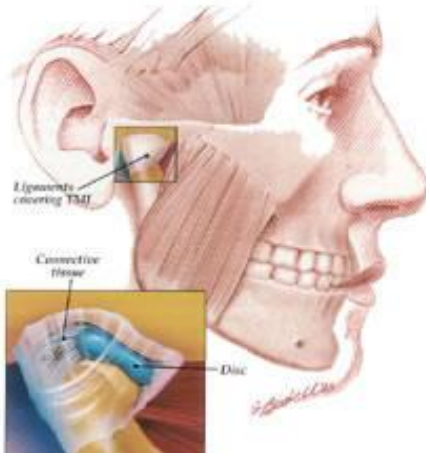
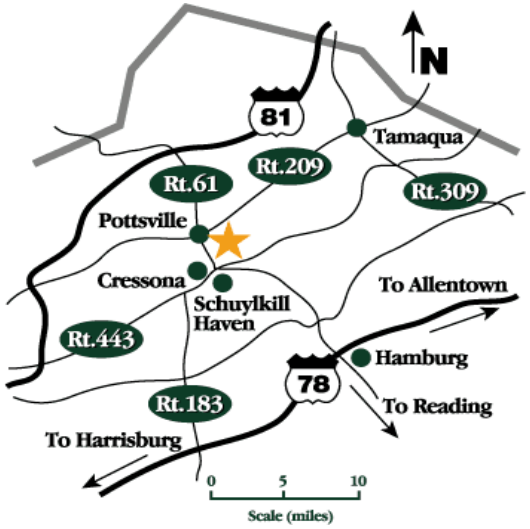
CAN PHYSICAL THERAPY HELP STOP YOUR JAW PAIN?





☆ **Schuylkill Rehabilitation Center is conveniently located in Pottsville**

Schuylkill Rehabilitation Center

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Schuylkill Rehabilitation Center

TMJ DYSFUNCTION

What is TMJ Dysfunction?

TMJ stands for the Temporomandibular Joint which is located between the ears and cheeks. TMJ dysfunction is a painful condition affecting the joints that connect the skull to the mandible (jaw bone) with an articular disk in between the two bones. TMJ relates to the alignment of the joints, muscles, disk, and the bite of the jaw. It is most commonly caused by an injury from a car accident or head trauma. Other causes include joint inflammation, poor posture, stress, arthritis, or misalignment of the teeth or jaw.

Symptoms of TMJ Dysfunction:

- Jaw pain or tenderness
- Dull, aching facial pain
- Clicking or rubbing sound or pain, while chewing or opening mouth
- Locking of the jaw
- Difficulty opening or closing the mouth
- Ringing in the ears
- Headaches
- Tooth sensitivity
- Dry or burning sensation in mouth
- Hearing loss

TREATMENT

If you experience any of these symptoms of TMJ dysfunction, see your dentist or family doctor. You may be referred to Physical Therapy for a variety of treatment options including: jaw active range of motion exercises, jaw strengthening exercises, soft tissue mobilization and massage, manual techniques to the jaw to improve range of motion, ultrasound, phonophoresis, iontophoresis, moist heat, and instruction in a home exercise program.

Your physical therapist will educate you on specific do's and don'ts regarding posture, eating, and sleeping habits, along with ergonomic tips, in relation to your TMJ dysfunction. A physical therapist can provide you with a detailed treatment plan, and guide you with proper self-management techniques you can use at home. This will result in reduced inflammation and increased range of motion and strength. Other benefits include postural awareness and decreased muscle spasms, which may help to reduce your TMJ dysfunction.

Listed on the next page, are the general do's and don'ts to manage TMJ pain. For further detail or to make an appointment to see one of our physical therapists, call us at (570) 621-9500.

Do's for TMJ Pain

- Chew on both sides of your mouth when eating.
- Drink liquids from a straw rather than a glass.
- Cut all foods into small bites, so as not to force your bite into a forward position.
- Use moist heat when joints feel tight.
- Have neck massages often.
- Be aware of your posture, keeping your chin tucked and your shoulders back.

Don'ts for TMJ Pain

- Never chew gum. It makes the jaws tighter and more tired.
- Do not chew steak or tough meat, or any sticky or chewy foods.
- Do not rest your chin in your hand when sitting.
- Do not yawn widely.
- Don't hold a telephone between shoulder and chin.
- Be aware of carrying heavy objects, as they exert pressure on one side of your body.
- Do not sleep on your stomach or with your hand on the side of your face. It throws the jaw into an awkward position.