

Your New TAP Appliance

We have put together this document to help introduce you to your new TAP appliance. Please read it carefully and let Dr. McLornan or any of his team know if you have any questions.

The new appliance is custom made to fit firmly to your teeth. It will fit tighter than night guards or bleaching trays you may have worn previously. This is a positive feature because it prevents the upper or lower trays from coming loose during the night when you are asleep. If the trays are hurting when they are first placed they will be adjusted but if they just feel tight we will recommend not adjusting them immediately because we may make the trays loose. It is normal for the teeth to feel tender during the first few weeks of wear, especially the upper front teeth and commonly when you remove your appliance in the morning. This tenderness will normally go away but if it persists Dr. McLornan will adjust the trays.

During the first few weeks of wear we recommend that you place the upper and lower trays in a dish of warm tap water (not boiling) for a few minutes before putting the trays in. This will soften the thermally sensitive inner layer of the tray which will allow the trays to seat more easily. It will not be necessary to do this after the first few weeks.

When Dr. McLornan delivers your new appliance he will make sure that you can place and remove both the upper and lower trays individually and he will show you how to hook the upper and lower trays together. It is recommended initially that you do this in front of a mirror until you are familiar with placing the trays and engaging the hook. To engage the hook you push the lower jaw forward until the upper hook engages in the T bar slot (TAP 3) or behind the bar (TAP 3 Elite). To disengage you push the lower jaw forward until the hook releases.

The upper and lower trays can also be hooked together outside the mouth and then inserted into the mouth together and you can bite into the trays to seat.

The trays are designed to resist being pulled straight off the teeth. Normally the best way to remove is to go to the back corner of the tray and try to move that one corner. When it starts to move the tray should peel off the teeth rather than snap straight off. The first couple of nights you wear the appliance we recommend that after you have your evening meal, clean your teeth and then put the trays in place and hook them together. Then you can wear the appliance for a couple of hours while you read or watch TV etc. This allows you to get used to wearing the appliance for a few hours and should make it easier to fall asleep with the appliance in place at bedtime.

There are a number of common side effects that you may experience when you first wear the appliance. These all tend to be short lived. Most patients experience excess saliva in the mouth. That is the mouth's normal reaction to something new. This excess saliva can even cause you to drool on your pillow while you are asleep. This generally ceases after about a week. Patients also often experience some tenderness in their jaw joints and muscles. Normally this tenderness does not require the use of painkillers but if it does, over the counter medications like Ibuprofen/ Motrin have been shown to work best. This also tends to resolve itself. If you experience pain in your joints and/ or muscles call Dr. McLornan's office as soon as possible. If there is pain in the joint on one side only this often tells us the upper and lower trays are in contact at the back on one side and need to be adjusted. Your new TAP appliance is adjustable; the upper hook can be moved forward using the TAP key. When the upper hook is moved forward, that increases the amount the lower jaw is held forward when the hook is engaged into the lower tray. We are going to instruct you to move the hook forward with the key to find the position of the lower jaw which treats your sleep problem best.

On the first night we will ask you not to use the key to adjust the hook but instead just focus on getting accustomed to the appliance.

Very rarely will you feel your sleep problem is fully treated during the first night of wearing the appliance. Most patients will report some positive change such as less snoring, less awakenings or feeling somewhat better rested the next day.

The next step is to start to adjust the appliance to find out the position that treats your sleep disorder best. We recommend advancing the hook one half turn (1/4mm) every second night until you feel resolution of your chief complaint which may be snoring and/or gasping for air, frequent awakenings or feeling excessively sleepy during the day.

When cleaning your new TAP appliance, remove from your mouth and rinse saliva off with water and pat dry before storing in blue container provided. Try to soak your TAP appliance with a denture cleansing tablet for approximately 20 minutes per day and again dry off for storage.