

Botox treats teeth clenching, grinding

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AnsWER: When doctors injected Botox to help patients with other medical conditions, they soon noticed a side effect — fewer noticeable wrinkles. That's because Botox blocks nerve impulses and reduces the muscle activity that causes wrinkles to form.

In dentistry, we may use Botox to treat bruxism, the clenching and grinding of teeth. Bruxism can cause your teeth to chip and break and even lead to temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder. Someone who suffers a jaw injury or deals with stress by tightening facial and jaw muscles may also get TMJ disorder. It can lead to pain, difficulty chewing and a clicking sound or grating sensation when you open your mouth. In severe cases of TMJ disorder, a person can damage the liga-



JUSTIN PHILIPP

ASK THE EXPERT

ments, tendons and the bone that make up the joint.

Botox can help by “erasing” muscle memory and the strength of the muscle contraction. Your jaw muscles are like other muscles in your body — the more you use them, the more they remember the motion

and become more efficient at performing it. As you clench and grind your teeth, your muscles become programmed. Botox can “relax” your muscles and help reduce pain. The relief is not permanent though — Botox generally lasts three to six months before another injection is needed.

Dr. Justin Philipp is a Chandler dentist. Reach him at 480-306-5506 or visit jphilipp.com.

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Botox isn't just for wrinkles: It also can treat teeth clenching and grinding



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