

Patient Instructions

Night Guard Care Instructions

Your night guard is a custom-fabricated appliance designed to protect your teeth, jaw joints, and muscles from the effects of grinding (bruxism) and clenching during sleep. Consistent wear and proper care will ensure it functions effectively and lasts as long as possible.

Wearing Your Night Guard

- Wear your night guard **every night** as directed. Most patients are unaware of grinding or clenching during sleep, so consistent wear is essential — even on nights when you feel fine.
- Give yourself 1–2 weeks to adjust to sleeping with the appliance. Most patients adapt quickly and notice improved sleep quality and reduced jaw soreness.
- If you experience jaw pain, headaches, or tooth sensitivity from grinding or clenching, wearing your night guard consistently will help reduce these symptoms over time.
- If your night guard causes significant pain, difficulty breathing, or does not seat properly, stop wearing it and call our office.

Inserting & Removing Your Night Guard

- To insert, seat the guard firmly over your teeth using gentle finger pressure. Do not bite it into place — this can distort the fit over time.
- To remove, use your fingertips to gently peel it from your teeth starting at the back. Avoid snapping it off forcefully.
- If the guard feels very tight or difficult to remove, do not force it. Contact our office so we can adjust the fit.

Cleaning Your Night Guard

- Rinse your night guard with cool water immediately after removing it each morning.
- Brush gently with a soft-bristled toothbrush and clear, unscented soap or a non-abrasive toothpaste. Clean all surfaces thoroughly.
- Allow it to air dry completely on a clean surface before placing it back in its case to prevent bacterial and mold growth.
- Deep clean **weekly** by soaking in a denture cleaning tablet (Efferdent or Polident) dissolved in cool water for 20–30 minutes, then rinse thoroughly.
- Do not use hot water, bleach, alcohol-based mouthwash, or abrasive cleaners.
- Do not boil, microwave, or put in the dishwasher.

Storing Your Night Guard

- Store in the ventilated case provided. Do not seal it in an airtight container while damp — the case needs airflow to prevent bacteria and mold growth.
- Keep away from heat sources (car dashboards, direct sunlight, bathroom steam) which can warp the plastic.
- Keep out of reach of children and pets.

Longevity & Replacement

- With proper care, night guards typically last 3–5 years. Heavy grinders may need replacement sooner.
- Signs you may need a new guard: visible cracks or holes, the material has worn through, a poor or loose fit, or a persistent odor that doesn't resolve with cleaning.
- Bring your night guard to every dental appointment so we can monitor wear and check the fit.
- If your night guard is lost or damaged, contact our office as soon as possible to avoid unprotected grinding.

Oral Hygiene

- Always brush and floss your teeth before inserting your night guard each evening.
- Bacteria from your teeth transfer directly onto the guard, so a clean mouth means a cleaner appliance.
- Continue with regular dental cleanings every 6 months or as recommended.

Questions? We're Here to Help.

Gardens Dentistry • (561) 508-6923

If your night guard is lost, damaged, or no longer fits correctly, please call us right away.