

The Bite Tab Exercise for TAP/OPAP users



Figure 1

All patients using mandibular advancement orthotics for the management of sleep disordered breathing will feel temporary changes to their bite each morning. The front teeth will hit with more force than the back teeth. This may be caused by the prolonged shortening of the muscles that provide us the ability to push our jaws forward. In the morning those muscles must be stretched to allow the back teeth to come together properly. Failure to do so could result in a permanent change to your bite. This temporary change may also be due to transient changes in the fluid location and pressures in the joint. It is very important therefore to be compliant with this exercise early in the day, every day. **(Figure 1)**



Figure 2

Upon waking, place bite tab between your front teeth and slide your jaw forward. Then slide your jaw backwards, the opposite direction as far as it will go and apply moderate biting pressure until you feel a slight tension up near your ear. This is the proper stretching of the muscle. Continue 15-20 second repetitions, testing your bite recovery. Continue these repetitions as needed to normalize the bite. **(Figure 2)**



Figure 3

Repeat the procedure with the bite tabs between the eye teeth biting with jaws aligned, attempting to bring the back teeth together. Again they cannot touch. You may find using one tab at a time alternating sides is also effective. **(Figure 3)** Leaning your chin onto your palm at a table with head facing down, slack-jawed, can also be effective at restoring the bite. Repeat this process later in the day if needed. Some patients report limited gum chewing can be helpful.



Figure 4

If you are unable to recover your bite rapidly and completely each day, contact your dentist. A slower advancement rate may be recommended after normalization of your bite. If you notice any changes in your joint, bite or muscle comfort, contact your dentist.