TMJ Treatments and The Activator Method

The temporomandibular joint, or TMJ, are joints that serve as shock absorbers for the jaw. However, this cushioning effect is lost when there is either misalignment of the joints or a breakdown of the cartilage that make up the joints. Chewing adds continual mechanical stress on the joints, which can cause them to further deteriorate.

Symptoms of TMJ
- Symptoms include:
  - Clicking or popping of the jaw
  - Pain when chewing
  - Earache(s)
- Headache(s)
- Grinding of the teeth
- Bite imbalance

TMJ disorder is formally described as a neurologically-and mechanically-associated disorder that is accompanied by facial and jaw pain, emanating from the TMJ area itself. Therefore, it may be necessary to not only target the TMJ and its cartilage, but also other areas of the upper body, including the neck.

Activator Method on TMJ

One of the core chiropractic techniques for TMJ disorder is the activator method, which has been found in several research studies to be effective in treating TMJ disorder. The chiropractic therapist utilizing the activator method does chiropractic work around the general area of the joint, as well as more targeted methods to the joint and cartilage itself.

The activator method of chiropractic adjustment is a treatment method that serves as an alternative to manual manipulation of the spine and body’s joints. The method itself employs the use of a device that applies a mechanical force. The method, along with the device, are considered to be a gentle chiropractic technique. The Activator device is small and spring-loaded, which is easily held in the doctor’s hand. It serves to deliver an impulse into the spine or whatever joint is being targeted. The aim
is to be able to either move the vertebrae or the joints enough, without causing injury.

**The Treatment**

During the application of the activator method in treating TMJ, the patient lies prone on the activator adjusting table, and is then instructed to bite down. The chiropractic specialist then determines the angle of adjustment that is necessary by examining the jaw and the angles of the various mandibular (lower jaw) regions. The patient may be asked to open their mouth if the anterior, or front part of the TMJ is determined to be damaged. Adjustment is then made as necessary to the joints.

Several treatments may be required to ensure proper adjustment of the TMJ. Furthermore, over time, with continual mechanical stress that includes not only chewing, but biting, talking and yawning, the TMJ may fall out of alignment. This will require further activator method treatment by a chiropractic specialist. However, the method is relatively free of discomfort, and does not rely on medication. It is therefore a more natural and effective way of targeting the issue at hand—the maladjustment of the temporomandibular joint. Call our office for your consultation, thanks for reading, and remember, keep fit and have fun!

**Resources:**


“We will listen to you, spend time with you, and help you recover.”

– Dr. Hamilton