

BRUXISM - TEETH GRINDING

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Introduction

Bruxism is a disorder of the stomatognathic system followed by parafunctional movements which includes clenching or grinding of the teeth. This is a very widespread problem that follows man from his genesis up to today's modern age. There are many definitions of bruxism. According to the American Academy of Orofacial Pain, bruxism is defined as "diurnal or nocturnal parafunctional activity including clenching, bracing, gnashing, and grinding of the teeth." Daily bruxism today is described as a special condition - bruxomania and is characterized only by clenching teeth. In patients with sleep bruxism, a clenching and grinding of the teeth is registered and it usually occurs in the early stage of sleep.



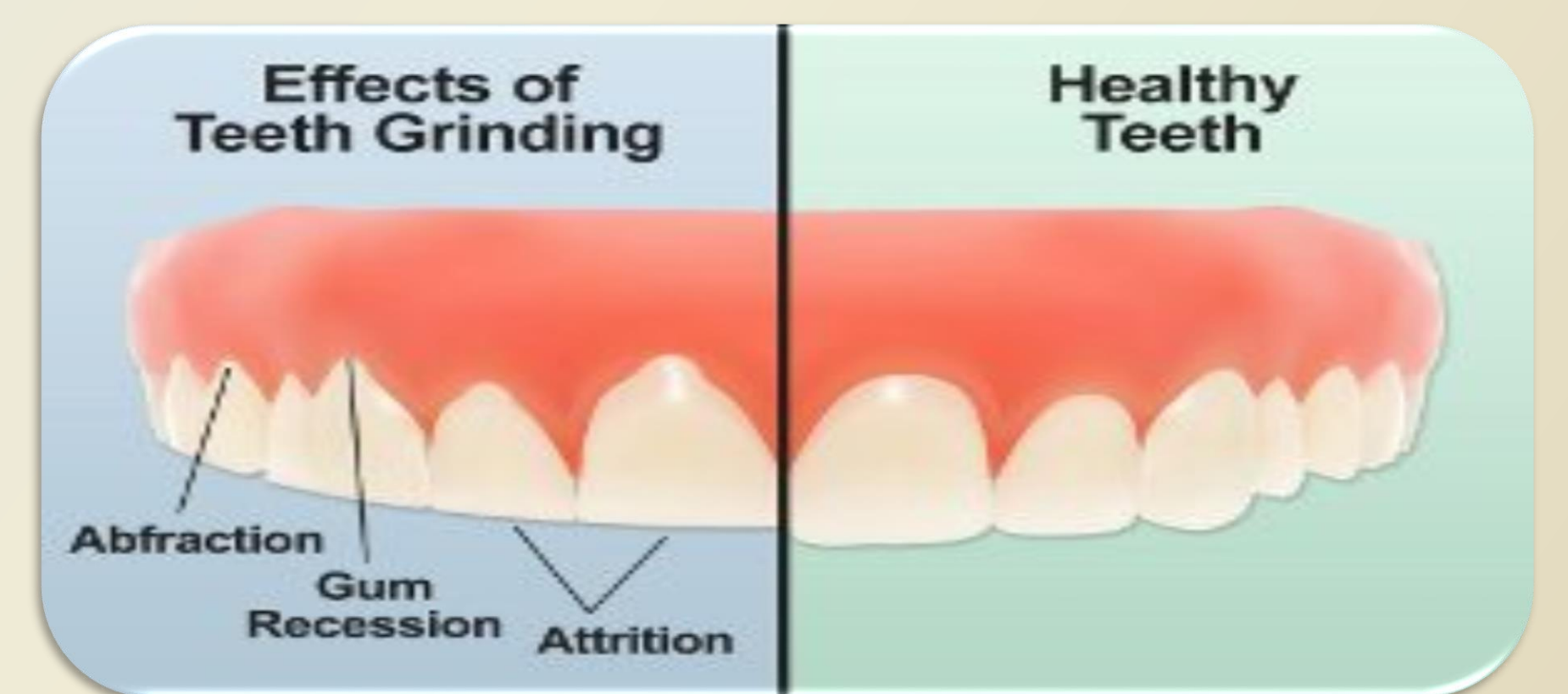
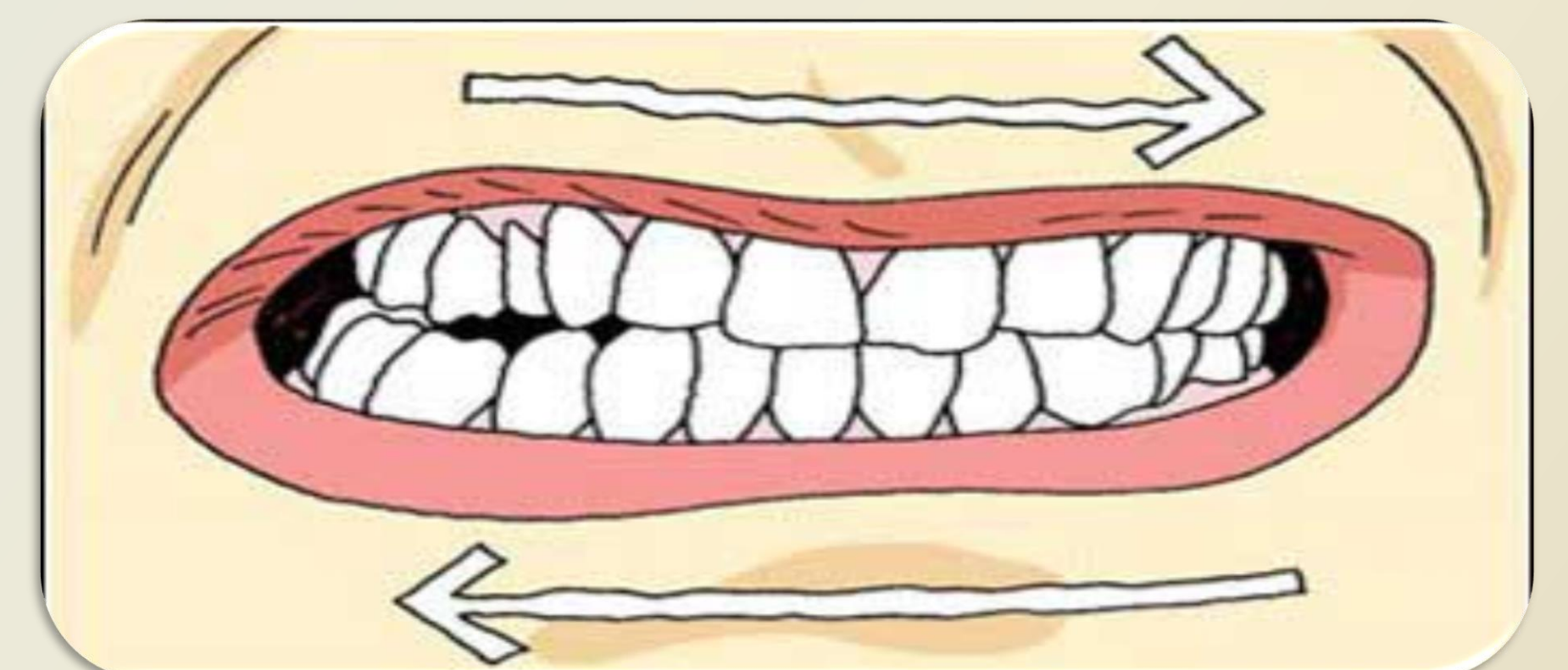
Etiology

Although this condition is with multifactorial etiology, many authors agree that stress and emotional factors are the primary cause of bruxism. In such situations, patients in order to relive tension unconsciously cause harmful parafunctional movements.

At the same time, genetic predisposition to bruxism has been confirmed, as well as the influence of some provocative factors - drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, malnutrition and central nervous system disorders. Bruxism can occur in all age groups, from young children to prosthetic carriers. However, the biggest incidence is registered in the adolescent period.

Signs and symptoms

Comparing to functional movements, parafunctional activities in bruxism develop much larger forces. The forces that occur can be vertical and horizontal. Therefore, bruxism can occur in two forms. The first is horizontal shape (grinding) when we have extreme horizontal movements. These movements cause attrition on the incisal edges and teeth cusps. This reduces patients' vertical dimension. The other form is - vertical (clenching) where are described minimal movements, which affect the lingual surface of the upper and labial surface of the lower front teeth, but do not influence on patients' vertical dimension. Objective signs and symptoms of bruxism are: abrasion, attrition; influence of the periodontal ligament and mobility of the teeth; hypertrophy of the masticatory muscles; changes in the temporomandibular joint; headaches and pain in the masticatory muscles.



Therapy



The therapy of bruxism is complex, like any treatment of phenomena and conditions that do not have a clear etiology. Treatment should include reduction of psychological stress, treating the symptoms of mandibular dysfunction, adjusting the occlusion by using occlusal splints, and, if necessary, including pharmacotherapy. Occlusal therapy can reduce the negative consequences of parafunctional activities, but not to stop them. This kind of therapy is used when parafunctional activities cause problems in the stomatognathic system such as muscular and temporomandibular joint disorders, pain, excessive abrasion and attrition of the hard tooth substance as well as increased mobility of the teeth. The following forms of splint are used in therapy: interdental protectors, repositioning and stabilizing splints.



Teeth Grinding: Should You Worry?

