OCCLUSAL SPLINTS FOR TEMPOROMANDIBULAR DISORDERS (TMD), BRUXISM, OR CLENCHING

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this therapy is to influence your lower jaw to function freely without pain and/or to prevent tooth wear. Many situations may cause the malfunction of your lower jaw. Examples are accidents, surgery, developmental defects, peculiar oral habits, many fillings placed over numerous years, naturally occurring malocclusion (poor bite), orthodontics, psychological stress, clenching or bruxism (grinding teeth), and other conditions.

2. **Rationale:** You have received a plastic bite splint (occlusal splint). This treatment has been used for many years. The splint is designed to prevent tooth wear and stabilize your jaw muscles and joints. For those with TMD, it should help you feel more comfortable and allow healing to occur. For those who clench or grind their teeth without muscle or joint pain, the splint will help prevent devastating tooth wear which can lead to tooth sensitivity, fractured teeth, and need for more extensive dental treatment to fix the damage.

3. **Instructions for use:**
   - Do not bite down on your splint. The splint is to help you realize when you are clenching and help you break this habit - *Your teeth should never touch the splint!* Constantly monitor your jaw position and remember to keep your tongue up and your teeth off of the splint.
   - Your splint may cause you to salivate more and may temporarily cause an increase in jaw tension or joint noises.
   - Most patients need to gradually increase the amount of time they wear their splint until they reach their recommended wear schedule. If your splint hurts your teeth, leave it out and come back to have it adjusted.
   - Do not wear your splint when you eat.
   - Clean the inside and outside of your splint at least daily using a brush with soap and water or mouthrinse. Do not use toothpaste as it is abrasive. It can also be soaked with a denture cleaner to help clean it but be sure to follow the instructions for the specific brand.
   - When you are not wearing your splint:
     - Be careful where you place it, because it is very fragile
     - Do not let it lay around, dogs and cats enjoy chewing on them
     - Do not leave it in a warm place (i.e. inside your car on a warm day), or it will warp
     - If your splint will be out of your mouth for more than 8 hours, store it in a moist environment.
     - Place it in the container we gave you or a zip-lock bag with a few drops of water.

4. **Maintenance Visits:** Visit us for regular, six month examinations. Always bring your splint with you to your regular hygiene maintenance visits so we can check your splint and clean it for you. We will contact you when it is time for your regular hygiene maintenance visits.

Please call if you have any questions or difficulty.