TMD
TEMPEROMANDIBULAR DISORDER/PAIN

What is the TMJ?
The temporomandibular joint connects the lower jaw to the bone at the side of the head, located in front of the ear.

Symptoms of TMD:
- Clicking, popping or grating sounds in the joint
- Pain at the joint site and/or when opening and closing the mouth
- Earaches
- Headaches
- Limited ability to open the mouth
- Pain when chewing

Causes:
- Grinding the teeth at night (bruxism)
- Trauma/injury
- Stress triggering pain in the jaw muscles, spasm in the jaw muscles from clenching the teeth
- Arthritis
- Displacement or dislocation of a disc that is located between the jawbone and the jaw socket

Diagnosis:
The diagnosis is made by history and physical exam. Unless the provider finds something unusual in the exam, most patients will not need x-rays.

Treatment:
- Avoid sleeping on your jaw. Sleeping on your back enables your jaw to relax.
- Application of ice pack or bag of frozen peas and massage of the area at least twice a day for 10 minutes. Do not put the ice directly on your skin.
- Heat applied may help also.
- Avoid chewy or hard foods. Avoid chewing gum or cracking ice. Eat soft foods.
- Avoid clenching your teeth. Many people clench their teeth when they are stressed or drive. Become aware of stressful situations that cause you to clench your teeth.
- OTC anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen or Alleve®. Take only as directed on the label.
- Avoid extreme jaw movements, such as wide yawning.
- A referral to an oral surgeon may be made if the above recommendations do not help. One mode of treatment that may be recommended is a bite plates/splint, special devices that fit in your mouth to keep you from grinding your teeth at night.
- Stress management counseling may be recommended.

For further information:
http://nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/TMJ