

## Night Guard / Occlusal Guard *Post-Care Instructions*

You've made a worthwhile investment in your oral health by acquiring a custom-made night guard. Caring for it properly will ensure your new night guard will continue protecting your teeth for years to come (note: every patient is different and most nightguards last 1-2 years, however some patients go through them quicker and some last longer).

### Proper Use

Compliance is critical! You can't prevent the damaging effects of bruxism on your teeth if you don't wear your night guard.

- Your night guard should be worn all night every night. If you find it difficult to adjust to this, you can start by wearing it a few hours each day and then gradually work up to wearing it for a full night every night.
- Rinse your night guard well with water before placing in your mouth.
- Don't "bite" your night guard into place; instead, place it in your mouth using your fingers.
- Rinse your night guard well with water after use and store it dry—in its case—in a safe place. Please do not wrap it in a napkin or paper towel—you could accidentally throw it away.
- Never soak your night guard in any liquid (mouthwash, denture cleanser, hot water) except as instructed below for thorough cleaning.
- Please keep your night guard stored in its case away from direct sunlight.
- **IMPORTANT:** Dogs love night guards! To your dog, it's a great chew toy, so always keep your night guard out of reach of your dog.
- Bring your night guard with you to your dental appointments, especially if you're having restorative work (filling, crown, etc.). We'll also examine it at your cleaning regular cleaning appointments for wear and correct fit.

### Caring for your Night Guard

Your oral health routine should include cleaning your night guard every day.

#### Daily Cleaning Instructions

- Rinse immediately after wear. Each time you wear your night guard, you should rinse it with warm water as soon as you remove it from your mouth to remove debris and plaque.
- Brush your night guard with your toothbrush. After rinsing, give your night guard a light brushing with your normal toothbrush, which should have soft or very-soft bristles.
- We recommend *not* cleaning with toothpaste. Toothpaste is too abrasive and can damage the material, causing your night guard to wear out more quickly than it should. You can use a liquid dish detergent with lukewarm water.
- Lay your night guard on a clean surface and allow it to dry completely before storing. Allow your night guard to dry completely before storing it to prevent rapid bacterial growth. Lay it on a clean, dry washcloth on a flat surface, out of reach of pets, to allow it to dry, which should take less than 30 minutes.
- Always store your night guard in its case. When you're not wearing your night guard, it's important to keep it stored in its case to keep from losing it.

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Deep Cleaning Instructions

We recommend deep cleaning your night guard at least once a month. Weekly deep cleaning is even better.

When following the instructions below, be sure not to soak your night guard in any liquid longer than an hour—extended soaks can damage the material. Also, we recommend against using mouthwash or denture cleaner.

- Step 1: Using a glass or bowl (nothing metal), soak the night guard in distilled white vinegar for 30 minutes. Use a timer if necessary to keep from oversoaking.
- Step 2: After soaking, rinse the night guard and bowl with lukewarm water.
- Step 3: Follow up by soaking the night guard in hydrogen peroxide for 30 minutes. Hydrogen peroxide will bleach discolorations out and neutralize the vinegar taste. Use a timer if necessary to keep from oversoaking.
- Step 4: Rinse your night guard thoroughly with lukewarm water, place it on a clean dry washcloth on a flat surface (out of reach of your dog), and allow it to dry completely before returning it to its case.
- Step 5: Cleaning your night guard can become a wasted effort if you put it in a dirty case. Keep the case clean by hand washing it every few days with liquid dish detergent. After washing, allow the case to dry completely to prevent bacteria growth.