

Temporomandibular Disorders

Overview of Temporomandibular Disorders

The term **temporomandibular** disorders is an umbrella term for conditions causing dysfunction of the jaw joint or pain in the jaw and face, often in or around the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), including masticatory and other muscles of the head and neck, the **fascia**, or both. A person is considered to have a temporomandibular disorder only if pain or limitation of motion is severe enough to require professional care.

Temporomandibular disorders typically are multifactorial, but most are

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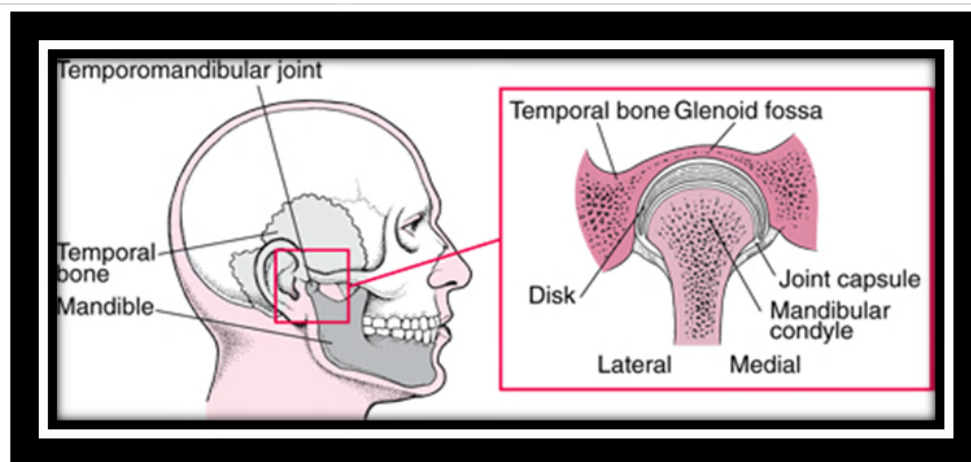
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The temporomandibular joint.



The joint is formed by the **mandibular condyle** and the **glenoid fossa** of the **temporal bone**; a **cartilaginous articular disk** functions as a cushion between the joint surfaces.

Diagnosis

Disorders of the TMJ must be distinguished from the many conditions that mimic them. Pain exacerbated by finger pressure on the joint when the mouth is opened implicates the TMJ.

Table 1

Some Conditions That Mimic Temporomandibular Disorders

Symptom	Condition
Headaches	Sinusitis

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Pain accompanied by hearing problems	Obstruction of the ear canals or eustachian tubes Otitis media
Pain in the head, neck, and other areas of the body	Fibromyalgia Generalized myofascial pain
Pain, numbness	Intracranial aneurysm Metastatic tumors
Pain that radiates to the temporomandibul	Whiplash injuries affecting muscle or cervical spine

ar joint region

Pain that worsens
when the patient
swallows or turns
the head

Cervical spine or muscle disorders
Eagle's syndrome ([calcified styloid process](#))
[Glossopharyngeal neuralgia](#)
[Subacute thyroiditis](#)

[Trismus](#)

Depressed fracture of the [zygomatic](#) arch
Infection
[Osteochondroma](#) of the [coronoid process](#)
[Pericoronitis](#)

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