



# Dental Clinical Policy

**Subject:** Occlusal Guard  
**Guidelines #:** 09-400  
**Status:** Revised

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## Description

This document addresses the procedure of occlusal guard, a removable appliance utilized to minimize or eliminate the effects of bruxism or clenching that can result in excessive wear or fractures of natural teeth or restorations.

## Clinical Indications

Occlusal guards cover teeth to protect them from bruxism and clenching of teeth. Occlusal guards may be constructed in the dental office or by an outside laboratory using rigid or semi rigid material. By definition, they are not an appropriate treatment or therapy for temporomandibular disorders.

## Contraindications

**Occlusal guards are not indicated for (and are not limited to):**

- treatment of temporomandibular disorders or myofascial pain dysfunction
- use as an athletic mouth guard
- use as an appliance intended for orthodontic tooth movement
- treatment of obstructive sleep apnea
- tooth whitening, fluoride delivery, or the delivery of periodontal medicaments

## Note:

**Whether a service is covered by the plan, when any service is performed in conjunction with or in preparation for a non-covered or denied service, all related services are also either not covered or denied.**

## Criteria

Occlusal guards:

1. Are used to protect natural teeth when the opposing dentition has the potential to cause enamel wear or damage such as the presence of porcelain or ceramic restorations.
2. Are used to minimize tooth sensitivity caused by clenching or bruxism.
3. May be necessary and appropriate to relieve stress from occlusion following periodontal therapy.
4. Require a narrative with rationale for treatment.
5. Partial arch occlusal guards may not be a covered service, contract dependent.

## Coding

*The following codes for treatments and procedures applicable to this document are included below for informational purposes. Inclusion or exclusion of a procedure, diagnosis or device code(s) does not*

constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement policy. Please refer to the member's contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage of these services as it applies to an individual member.

**CDT**                      *Including but not limited to*

D0320	temporomandibular joint arthrogram, including injection
D0321	other temporomandibular joint radiographic images, by report
D0330	panoramic radiographic images
D0470	diagnostic casts
D7880	occlusal Orthotic device
D7881	occlusal Orthotic device adjustment
D9130	temporomandibular joint dysfunction – non-invasive physical therapies
D9936	cleaning and inspection of occlusal guard – per appliance
D9941	fabrication of athletic mouth guard
D9942	repair and/or reline of occlusal guard
D9943	occlusal guard adjustment
D9944	occlusal guard – hard appliance full arch
D9945	occlusal guard – soft appliance full arch
D9946	occlusal guard – hard appliance partial arch
D9953	reline custom sleep apnea appliance (direct)

**ICD-10 CM Diagnoses for Dental Diseases and Conditions:** See the current CDT code book for details

**References**

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3. Idesley WR, Field A, Longman L
4. (2003). Tyldesley's Oral medicine (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 195. [ISBN 0192631470](#).
5. Lobbezoo F, van der Zaag J, van Selms MK, Hamburger HL, Naeije M (July 2008). "Principles for the management of bruxism". Journal of Oral Rehabilitation. **35** (7): 509–23. [doi:10.1111/j.1365-2842.2008.01853.x](#). [PMID 18557917](#).
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7. Jagger R (2008). "The effectiveness of occlusal splints for sleep bruxism". Evidence-based Dentistry. **9** (1): 23. [doi:10.1038/sj.ebd.6400569](#). [PMID 18364692](#).
8. CDT 2026 Current Dental Terminology, American Dental Association.

**History**

Revision History	Version	Date	Nature of Change	SME
	initial	6/20/2018	new	DPC
	Revision	10/07/2020	Annual Review	Committee
	Revised	12/06/2020	Annual Review	Committee

	Revised	10/30/2021	Annual Review	Committee
	Revised	11/11/2022	Annual Review	Committee
	Revised	11/01/2023	Annual Review	Committee
	Revised	11/05/2024	Minor editorial refinements to clinical indications; intent unchanged.	Committee
	Revised	10/17/2025	Addition of code D9936	Dr. Stewart Balikov

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