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January 14, 2010

San Diego Dentist: Migraine solution might be a mouthful

Patients plagued by chronic headaches and muscle pain might find relief at an unexpected source: the dentist

Jaw alignment could be the cause of some neck, back, shoulder and migraine pain, vertigo, hearing loss or temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ) symptoms, according to Dr. Shahin Safarian, who practices neuromuscular dentistry in San Diego.

"The muscles are trying to find a comfortable position and they haven't found their home yet, so they are over-straining, that results in pain," says Dr. Safarian. "When muscles start fatiguing, they give off lactic acid that causes pain."

Neuromuscular dentists like Dr. Safarian use equipment called EMGs, or electromyography scans, to measure how well motor nerves are working and which muscles are fatigued. Then he can outfit the patient with a custom mouth guard that will realign the jaw and relieve tension in the head.

"Everything has to be balanced to function," says Dr. Safarian. "When there is harmony, you can get rid of 95 percent of migraines, (and) 70 percent of ear problems if it's not related to natural hearing loss."

He points out that professional athletes know the benefit of an aligned jaw. Athletes, including Shaquille O'Neal, use and endorse similar mouth guards called the Makkar Advantage Mouthguard, or a mandibular repositioning sports appliance. The science for these performance-enhancing appliances stems from the mouth guards used to relieve muscle pain, but these versions also increase oxygen flow and improve balance for athletes, according to Dr. Safarian. The device is now a big hit in the NFL.

"The Makkar Advantage Mouthguard allows them more oxygen, and when they are working out, they can lift more," he says.

And those wearing a Makkar Advantage Mouthguard have better results when Dr. Safarian gives them a balance and strength test.

"Whatever I do is going to enhance them and their performance in sport," he says. "Giving athletes that extra edge they need makes all the difference in the world during game time."

There are currently over 300 professional athletes using the Makkar Advantage Mouthguard, with representation in Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Hockey League (NHL), the National Football League (NFL), and most sports in the National Collegiate Athletic Association

(NCAA). As well, there are over 1,000 collegiate, Olympic and amateur athletes who have embraced the Makkar Advantage Mouthguard phenomenon.

The Makkar Advantage Mouthguard (formerly called the Pure Power Mouthguard) was invented by Dr. Anil Makkar, a renowned neuromuscular dentist in Canada and the device is now the rave in the sports world. Terrell Owens, Buffalo Bills, Josh Brown, St. Louis Rams, Michael Turner, Atlanta Falcons, Scott McCarron, PGA and Steve Elkington, PGA are just a handful of notable sports heroes using the high-tech device since it was launched only two years ago. Even celebrities like Mario Lopez and Chris Harrison are believers in the device and use it religiously during their workouts at the gym.

You can learn more at www.makkaradvantage.com

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