

# **New!** Delta Dental – Mouthguard Benefit

## Relax for a Better Smile

How stress can affect your oral health



Have you been feeling stressed or anxious lately? Talk to your dentist. A number of stress-related disorders can affect your mouth. Seeing your dentist for regular cleanings and exams can help identify and treat these problems.

### **TEETH GRINDING** (Bruxism)

#### What is it?

Bruxism is the technical term for grinding your teeth and clenching your jaw.

#### Causes

- Stress and anxiety
- Sleep disorders
- Abnormal bite and missing or crooked teeth

#### Symptoms

Nervous tension, anger and frustration can be accompanied by these signs in the mouth:

- Teeth with flat tips
- Sensitive teeth
- Tongue indentations
- Decreasing tooth enamel

### **TMJ** (Temporomandibular disorders)

#### What is it?

TMJ (also known as TMD) refers to a group of conditions that affect the temporomandibular (jaw) joint and associated muscles. Stressful situations can aggravate TMJ by causing you to overuse jaw muscles.

#### Causes

- Stress
- Clenching or grinding teeth

#### Symptoms

- Popping or clicking of the jaw
- Jaw joint pain
- Teeth with flat tips
- Decreasing tooth enamel

## Maintain your oral health when stressed

- **See your dentist.** If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it's a good idea to see your dentist. Your dentist may be able to recommend specific treatments if you have bruxism or TMJ, such as a custom mouthguard or orthodontic treatment.
- **Take the time to unwind.** Consider ways of relieving stress by engaging in relaxing activities such as meditation, massage or yoga. You may even find exercise, physical therapy or counseling to be a good outlet to reduce tension.