

CHAPTER 10

WHAT ELEVATES OUR TEAM

Great treatment requires a great team ... we are here for you!

What elevates us at the TMJ & Sleep Therapy Centre of Northern Indiana is our drive to never give up. With every patient, we commit to doing everything we can to uncover the root cause of their problem and improve their quality of life. I pride myself on not stopping until we get to the bottom of the problem and you get the results you're looking for. If I don't have all the answers, I will search for someone who does.

Let me share with you Brittney's story as an example of what I mean. At age thirty-three, Brittney came to see us for help in relieving her pain in her ears, eyes, and face along

with dizziness and Meniere's disease, a chronic condition of the inner ear that causes vertigo, progressive hearing loss, and ringing in the ears. At the time, she was taking seven medications for her Meniere's disease and migraines, and she had undergone multiple treatments for both conditions, but nothing had been done to address her TMD.

As a child, she'd had her adenoids and tonsils removed, and she'd even undergone a sleep study in the past, but no significant improvements were ever made. Basically, she was in management mode and was told that her pain and Meniere's were conditions she would have to live with the rest of her life.

Fortunately, she found us via a Google search and came in for an evaluation, driving an hour and a half to see if we might be able to help.

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—— VICTORY ——

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During her comprehensive evaluation, we found significant inflammation inside Brittney's

TM joints, and we explained to her the correlation between TMD, dizziness, and referred ear pain. Her diagnosis was capsulitis of the TM joints and mouth breathing. She had a great deal of inflammation inside the TM joints, causing significant discomfort, and her perpetual mouth breathing was contributing to that disease process. Happily, we were certain

that we'd be able to help initiate treatment and begin to get her on a path of significant relief based on the problems we were able to diagnose.

A SPIRIT OF COMFORT

At the TMJ & Sleep Therapy Centre of Northern Indiana, we try to embody a spirit of comfort. We want patients to feel welcome, at home, and important from the moment they walk into our office. We spend a lot of time getting to know patients; we're there to listen to your concerns, to ensure that all your questions are answered, and to determine whether we can, in fact, help you. If for some reason I feel that we cannot help you with your chief complaints and what you're searching for, again, we'll do our very best to get you in touch with the best practitioner we feel might be suitable for you.

We are not just another office that dabbles in treating patients with pain and sleep problems. I have dedicated my life and career to treating these disorders. I am currently the only doctor within a hundred-mile radius of South Bend, Indiana, that is triple-board certified in craniofacial pain and dental sleep medicine. It is now my life's work.

We have a unique team of multidiscipline providers specifically trained to help patients with craniofacial pain and sleep breathing problems.

I think you'll enjoy our welcoming office culture; we get compliments from patients daily about how much they like coming to our office because of our great team. My team is my greatest strength and I am very grateful for their commitment to me and, more importantly, their commitment to you.

COMPREHENSIVE DIAGNOSTICS

One of the hallmark benefits of being a patient of ours is that we have comprehensive diagnostics all under one roof. If you are a candidate for a comprehensive evaluation, you will leave with results of these diagnostic tests on the day of your visit and have a clear-cut treatment plan.

Some of the technologies that allow us to conduct those tests include:

- **Cone beam computed tomography (CBCT).** It's no secret that the more anatomical information available, the better we are able to diagnose and plan. The CBCT is an on-site, 3-D X-ray unit that captures information not possible with 2-D X-rays. It captures that data using an incredibly low dose of radiation, which puts the patient at minimal risk—something we take very seriously. In fact, the X-rays we take using the CBCT are

about equal to the radiation a person gets just from living on Earth in a day's time.

- **Joint vibration analysis (JVA)** measures the friction inside the TM joint. Simple sensors are placed in front of the ears, and the patient is instructed to open and close their mouth so that the vibrations can be recorded. Human joints have surfaces that rub together as they function. Smooth, well-lubricated surfaces and proper biomechanical relationships produce little friction and little vibration, but surface changes such as those caused by degeneration, tears, or displacement of discs generally produce friction and vibration.

Different disorders can produce different vibration patterns and signatures. We use this technology to accurately diagnose your specific condition. It is a painless, fast, and accurate test. Results are reviewed at the appointment, and the results are part of the diagnostic plan.

- **Cold laser therapy**, commonly referred to as photobiomodulation therapy (PBMT), laser therapy, and low-level laser therapy, is a therapeutic laser modality. We use the Multiwave Locked System (MLS), the most advanced laser therapy on the market. Reduced response times—and overall treatment times—distinguish the MLS laser therapy from traditional laser therapy, with

reciprocal advantages for both the operator and the patient. I am able to quickly adapt this technology and see improvements in the patient's quality of life, including, most notably, reduction in pain and swelling and an increase in mobility.

MLS technology delivers therapeutic wavelengths at 808 nanometers, which is anti-endemic and anti-inflammatory, and 905 nanometers, which is an analgesic, allowing tissue penetration of about three to four centimeters. An energetic synergy is created when delivering these wavelengths, and it produces greater anti-inflammatory and analgesic effects than any other can produce on its own, while minimizing the risk of thermal damage to the tissue. It's this unique combination and synchronization of continuous and pulsed emissions that characterizes the MLS and distinguishes it from other lasers.

While this laser has high levels of efficacy, it is extremely safe and provides consistency in treatment. Current literature supports the benefits of PBMT, and some recent studies show as high as a 50 percent decrease in pain upon the first treatment.

- **MediByte** is a diagnostic home sleep test system with straps that attach to the chest and stomach. The beauty of the equipment is that it gathers

extremely accurate data while allowing the patient to do a one-night sleep study in the confines of their own home. While only a board-certified sleep physician can diagnose the presence of OSA, MediByte allows us to administer the sleep test through our office and send the results to our colleagues and practitioners to help get the proper diagnosis. We have multiple MediByte units in our office and use them on a daily basis with our patients at the beginning and end of treatment.

While we offer comprehensive diagnostics and care in our office, given the complexity of the health care problems we tackle, we also collaborate with other medical and dental colleagues for collaboration and help in treating patients. Some of the medical specialists we routinely partner with include physicians specializing in ENT, sleep, osteopathic medicine, primary care, rheumatology, neurology, pulmonology, pain management, chiropractic, physical medicine and rehabilitation, and pediatrics. We also have great relationships with physical therapists, speech pathologists, mental health therapists, nutritionists, dietitians, and wellness coaches.

We find that using a team approach and collaborating with other health care providers delivers the best results for our patients. If your treatment plan includes help from another practitioner, we will get you in touch with them, help coordinate your appointments, and ensure they have all the diagnostic information needed to collaborate with us about your care.

Your treatment will be a customized plan that's specific to you—and only you. We do not have a cookie-cutter approach to care, and everyone's treatment plan is distinctly different. Again, compliance is a great determinant of treatment success. As my father taught me, we can only help a patient as much as they're willing to help themselves. Your success is important to us, and I can guarantee that we will be with you every step of the way. But if you want a victory, you have to commit to the process. We can't achieve the best results without you taking an active role in your own treatment, and we are here to help you each step along the way.

Brittney did just that, and the results speak for themselves.

BRITTNEY'S VICTORY

We began Brittney's treatment in April. She was compliant with all of our home-care recommendations and lifestyle changes, in addition to the orthotics we fabricated to treat her TMD. Within twelve weeks of starting treatment, Brittney reported that her dizziness, eye pain, and maxilla and mandible pain were completely gone, and her facial and headache pain were nearly gone. At twelve weeks, we began weaning Brittney off her orthotics, and she was able to resume normal use of her maxilla and mandible without her daytime orthotic in place. At that point in her treatment, she also reported that all of her pain was completely gone—100 percent resolved within twelve weeks.

Since she no longer had symptoms of Meniere's disease, she wanted to know if the problem all along was TMD. We recommended that she follow up with an ENT physician to see if the diagnosis of Meniere's disease could be eliminated from her medical history, since she was now asymptomatic for the first time. In the end, the Meniere's diagnosis no longer mattered to Brittney; what mattered to her was that her pain and dizziness were gone and that the root of her problems had been discovered. That's what ultimately resolved her problems.

The most touching part of Brittney's treatment was when she offered to do a video testimonial for us. When asked "How has treatment helped you?" Brittney replied through tears, "The best part ... is to be alive again."

It's a privilege and an honor for me and my staff to help patients like Brittney and the others shared in this book get their lives back again.

Here's what a few other patients have said about the TMJ & Sleep Therapy Centre of Northern Indiana.:

I woke up in pain every day with my jaw clenched tightly. I began having pain in my neck, shoulders, and lower back. I started having problems with my teeth/jaw lining up when I would close my mouth. The treatment helped me greatly reduce my pain, controlling my clenching and realigning my jaw into a natural, comfortable position. I couldn't believe how quickly the staff knew me by name! Each time I came, I was greeted by the friendly staff who made it

obvious they truly care about their patients! They were also helpful when it came to helping me navigate the insurance process. ~ Rachel H.

My general practitioner thought I was having a stroke as I was having ear pain, and facial numbness on the left side. There was so much pain I couldn't do anything. Now I can function and take care of my obligations and graduate school. ~ Michele T.

I would stop breathing at night and gasp for air. My husband said my snore was pretty loud too. I feel more rested in the morning, my jaw doesn't hurt, I sleep more soundly. (The staff) are so nice and answer all my questions. Best staff around. —Nancy H.