

# The TMJ Association



*...Changing the face of TMJ*

**The Resource Center for  
Education • Support • Research • Advocacy  
on Temporomandibular (Jaw)  
Diseases and Disorders**

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## **What are TMJ Diseases and Disorders?**

"TMJ" stands for TemporoMandibular Joint, or the jaw joint. You have two TMJs, one in front of each ear, connecting the lower jaw bone (the mandible) to the skull. The joints allow movement up and down, side to side, and forward and back—all the mobility necessary for biting, chewing and swallowing food, for speaking and for making facial expressions.

Temporomandibular joint diseases and disorders, commonly called TMJ, are a collection of poorly understood conditions characterized by pain in the jaw and surrounding tissues and limitations in jaw movements. Injury and conditions that routinely affect other joints in the body, such as Arthritis, also affect the temporomandibular joint.

## **Who is Affected by TMJ Diseases and Disorders?**

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) states that over 10 million people in the United States suffer from TMJ problems at any given time. While both men and women experience TMJ problems, the majority of those seeking treatment are women in their childbearing years.

## **History of The TMJ Association**

Terrie Cowley and Sandra Geilfuss founded The TMJ Association (TMJA) in August 1986 because of their experiences with TMJ treatments. Their intent was to establish a support group which would meet monthly to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences, information, understanding and support for TMJ patients.

Initially, those involved in the TMJA wanted to learn just how much the healthcare community knew about TMJ diseases and

disorders. They learned that TMJ scientific research was in its infancy, that there was no coherent body of knowledge on the causes and progression of TMJ diseases and disorders, and that TMJ treatments lacked significant scientific validity.

## **About The TMJ Association**

The TMJ Association is a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the diagnosis, care and treatment of everyone affected by TMJ diseases and disorders through fostering research, education and other activities with the ultimate goal of preventing TMJ problems. We achieve our mission by:

- Advocating for the needs of TMJ patients.
- Promoting awareness of TMJ diseases and disorders among the public, policy makers, research and healthcare communities.
- Connecting TMJ patients with those who can provide knowledgeable support and empathetic understanding.
- Encouraging basic and clinical research on TMJ diseases and disorders to provide greater understanding and safer and more effective methods of diagnosis and treatment, based on scientific evidence.
- Serving as a resource for the collection and dissemination of information on advances in research, treatment, insurance practices, patients' rights, and legal and ethical issues.
- Communicating with elected officials, government agencies, professional organizations, community leaders and other policy makers concerning TMJ issues.
- Collaborating with a prestigious Scientific Advisory Board.

## Challenges

Unfortunately, treatments are based largely on beliefs that are not grounded in thorough scientific research. As a result, some patients are made worse by these treatments.

TMJ diseases and disorders can drastically alter the lives of patients, their families and loved ones. Patients can be so disabled by pain and dysfunction that they have to abandon career goals and even hopes of having children. Due to the unpredictability of TMJ symptoms, many patients are unable to participate in family and social activities. The overwhelming expenses of TMJ diseases and disorders, including treatment costs that are often not covered by health insurance, cause many to declare bankruptcy.

To add to their burdens, TMJ patients may experience a lack of compassion and understanding by their healthcare providers, family and friends. Patients are frequently blamed for their symptoms and for not improving after treatment. The combination of pain and suffering, coupled with feelings of isolation and hopelessness, has led some to suicide.

## How Does The TMJ Association Respond to these Challenges? We...

- Present the needs of patients to policy makers, monitor issues that affect TMJ patients and advocate for important changes.
- Facilitate communication among and between TMJ patients to address their needs for information and support.
- Convene scientific meetings, often co-sponsored by agencies of the National Institutes of Health. The goals of these meetings are to build a solid scientific basis for TMJ research and to define future directions for that research.

Publish scientific meeting summaries and recommendations in *TMJ Science*, the journal of The TMJ Association. The meeting proceedings are published in the peer reviewed scientific journal, *Cells, Tissues, Organs*.

Inform TMJ patients, scientists and the general public about timely information through our brochures and quarterly newsletter, *TMJ Communiqué* and through our comprehensive and highly-respected Web site, **www.tmj.org**.

The TMJ Association is dedicated to *changing the face of TMJ*. Future plans call for direct funding of research projects and the creation of a National Patient Care Center to serve the needs of TMJ patients.

## How You Can Help

We depend upon the support of those who believe in what we do and how we are doing it. Please support our efforts by investing in the future of the TMJA through a tax-deductible contribution.

You can also help by contacting your elected officials in Congress at **www.senate.gov** and **www.house.gov** and the National Institutes of Health at **www.nih.gov**. Tell them how TMJ problems have affected your life. Urge them to fund quality, multidisciplinary scientific research, develop safe and effective treatments, and ultimately find ways to prevent TMJ problems.

To learn more about The TMJ Association and TMJ diseases and disorders contact us at:

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Fax: 414-259-8112  
E-mail: [info@tmj.org](mailto:info@tmj.org)  
Web site: [www.tmj.org](http://www.tmj.org)

## Contribution Form

Yes! I want to help *change the face of TMJ* by supporting The TMJ Association's mission and those affected by TMJ diseases and disorders.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Donor - \$1 - \$49

Friend - \$50 - \$99

Contributor - \$100 - \$499

Supporter - \$500 - \$999

Sponsor - \$1,000 - \$4,999

Patron - \$5,000 - \$9,999

Benefactor - \$10,000 and above

✂ May we acknowledge your gift in our next newsletter?  Yes  No

Name should be listed as:  
(Mr./Mrs./Ms./Mr. and Mrs./Dr.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
payable to The TMJ Association.

To make a credit card donation, visit us on-line at [www.tmj.org](http://www.tmj.org) or fill out the following:

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Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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By supporting The TMJ Association, you will be kept informed of our activities through our newsletters and special mailings.

**Thank you!**