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(Editor's Note: If you have a clinical or practice management Pearl to share with your colleagues, send it to JCO, 1828 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302. Appropriate illustrations are welcome; a photograph of the author and a copyright transfer form are required prior to publication.)

A Simple and Economical Moist Heat Pack

Moist heat is an excellent adjunct in the treatment of acute TMD. The following home remedy provides immediate relief to most patients while a definitive diagnosis and treatment plan can be formulated.

A white tube sock (preferably 100% cotton) is filled with about 2 pounds of uncooked long-grain rice (not instant), and the open end is tied. The filled sock is heated in a microwave oven on the highest setting for about three minutes. The sock should be handled carefully after heating; trial and error will determine the best heating time for any particular microwave. The patient then holds the heated sock under the chin so that both temporomandibular joints are covered.

This method maintains an acceptable temperature for about 25 minutes. Because rice is hygroscopic (releasing water when heated and taking on water from the atmosphere while cooling), the pack is an effective way to apply moist heat and can be used over and over.



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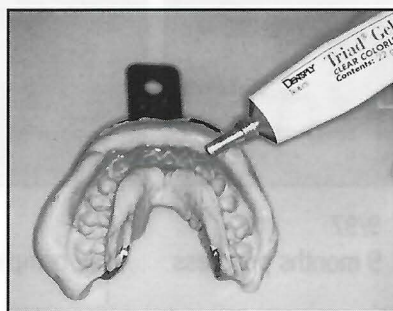


Chairside Acrylic Dental Casts

Acrylic dental casts can be made immediately for extraoral case evaluations or for quick fabrication of simple appliances, such as 3-3 lingual retainers. The entire process takes five to 15 minutes.

Take alginate impressions, and pour Triad Gel light-cured acrylic* into the occlusal surfaces (the entire impression is not poured to save time and expense). Cure the acrylic for about a minute, then remove the acrylic cast from the impression. Any bubbles in the acrylic will usually be inconsequential. After removal of the acrylic, the impressions can be used to make conventional casts if desired.

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