

Occlusal Guards

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[Instructions for Use](#)

Table of Contents	Page
Coverage Rationale	1
Definitions	1
Applicable Codes	1
Description of Services	2
References	2
Policy History/Revision Information	2
Instructions for Use	2

Related Medical Policy

- [Treatment of Temporomandibular Joint Disorders](#)

Coverage Rationale

This Clinical Policy addresses Occlusal guards for the protection of the dentition. Occlusal guards intended to relieve symptoms of temporomandibular joint disorders, as well as Occlusal orthotic devices, are addressed in the related Medical Policy titled [Treatment of Temporomandibular Joint Disorders](#).

Occlusal Guards

Occlusal guards are indicated for the following:

- [Bruxism](#) or clenching, either as a nocturnal parasomnia or during waking hours, resulting in excessive wear or fractures of natural teeth or restorations
- To protect natural teeth when the opposing dentition has the potential to cause enamel wear such as the presence of porcelain or ceramic restorations

Occlusal guards are not indicated for the following:

- As an appliance intended for orthodontic tooth movement
- For treatment of temporomandibular disorders
- For treating headaches or other pain disorders of the craniofacial region
- As a mouthguard to protect the dentition during sports

Definitions

Bruxism: Repetitive jaw muscle activity characterized by clenching or grinding of the teeth and/or by bracing or thrusting of the mandible. (Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine, Sixth Edition)

Occlusal: Pertaining to the biting surfaces of the premolar and molar teeth or contacting surfaces of opposing teeth or opposing occlusion rims. (ADA)

Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this guideline does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

CDT Code	Description
D9936	Cleaning and inspection of occlusal guard – per appliance
D9942	Repair and/or relines of occlusal guard
D9943	Occlusal guard adjustment
D9944	Occlusal guard – hard appliance, full arch
D9945	Occlusal guard – soft appliance, full arch
D9946	Occlusal guard – hard appliance, partial arch

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Description of Services

Occlusal guards are fabricated from rigid or semi rigid/soft materials to cover teeth to protect them from Bruxism and clenching of teeth. They may be constructed in the dental office or by an outside laboratory. They are not for the treatment of, or therapy for, diagnosed temporomandibular disorders.

References

American Dental Association (ADA) CDT Codebook 2026.

American Dental Association. Glossary of Dental Clinical and Administrative Terms.

Svensson., Arima T., Lavigne G., et al. Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine. Seventh edition. Elsevier c2022. Chapter 169, Sleep Bruxism: Definition, Prevalence, Classification, Etiology, and Consequences; 1631-1635.e4.

Policy History/Revision Information

Date	Summary of Changes
01/01/2026	<p>Applicable Codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated list of applicable CDT codes to reflect annual edits; added D9936 <p>Supporting Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archived previous policy version DCG019.12

Instructions for Use

This Dental Clinical Policy provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare standard and Medicare Advantage dental plans. When deciding coverage, the member specific benefit plan document must be referenced as the terms of the member specific benefit plan may differ from the standard dental plan. In the event of a conflict, the member specific benefit plan document governs. Before using this policy, check the member specific benefit plan document and any applicable federal or state mandates. UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Dental Clinical Policy is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.