

The reaction of periodontal tissues to splints used in maxillo-facial surgery

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The word splint is often carelessly used in the literature and is frequently taken to mean only those rigid appliances used in the fixation of fractured jaws. In this dissertation the word will correctly be used as defined in the Heinemann Modern Dictionary for Dental students. Here a splint is defined as an appliance which may be rigid or flexible, used to immobilize the ends of fractured bones or to restrict the movement of joints. A dental splint is defined as any form of appliance or device used to fasten and immobilize the teeth. Therefore splints used in maxillo-facial surgery include all the appliances in the form of wire ligatures, arch bars (flexible or rigid) and acrylic devices used in the treatment of jaw fractures as well as fixation after jaw osteotomies. The splints are usually applied to teeth, the alveolar processes and other skeletal parts of the face. Their function is to immobilize the fractured or osteotomized jaws, maintain them in a reduced position, and facilitate intermaxillary fixation if so desired. A short review of the most commonly used splints and some of their modifications will be given. It must be noted that it is beyond the scope of this study to give an exhaustive oversight of all splints, all modifications, their history and use.