

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF TEMPOROMANDIBULAR DISORDERS

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The addition of new imaging modalities, specifically magnetic resonance imaging has and will continue to increase the amount of diagnostic information available to the clinician. Imaging is the only method of obtaining visual information on the status of the joint tissues short of arthroscopy or open joint surgery. The magnetic resonance imaging capacity to contrast soft tissue types makes it an ideal tool for investigating internal derangements. Its ability to image in multiple planes is well suited for examining the three-dimensional nature of internal derangements of temporomandibular joints. A major bonus is its freedom from ionizing radiation and other known health hazards making it a low-risk method for research and clinical investigation. A major disadvantage is its cost and associated limited availability. Magnetic resonance imaging examinations of the temporomandibular joints are part of the current standard of care in the evaluation of temporomandibular disorders, providing the clinician anatomic information that can guide treatment decisions.

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