

Removable complete and partial denture care

Following the delivery of new dentures, there is a variable period of time (generally 2-6 weeks) of adjustment. New dentures often feel bulky and awkward at first. Soft tissues of the mouth now covered may have been open or left uncovered, by a previous denture. This strangeness, although bothersome, is a temporary problem that is usually resolved during the adjustment period.

The ability to function with complete dentures involves learned neuromuscular skills that take time to develop. Although the time required may vary and depend upon such factors as the quality of the remaining ridges, all new denture wearers will require this adjustment period.

The new artificial teeth may be placed in slightly different relationships and the plastic denture base may feel bulky, speech patterns are often temporarily interrupted. The muscles of the tongue, lips, and cheek must learn to coordinate movement to allow for normal speech. The learning process can be enhanced by practice. Reading aloud is one way to minimise the time required to recover normal speech patterns. Continued difficulty should be brought to our attention.

Saliva

A normal response of the body to new dentures is increased salivary flow. This over time will ease.

Eating

Again, it will take practice to learn to eat a fairly normal diet with new dentures. During the first several days, we recommend a soft diet to allow us to eliminate potential sore spots with a minimum of discomfort and to make the learning period more tolerable. Avoid tough, hard, and sticky foods until you become more experienced.

Although some experienced denture patients can eat a normal diet, including apples, salads and corn on the cob, this is probably the exception to the rule. Most denture-wearers will find some restrictions in the foods they can manage.

Some points to remember regarding eating and chewing habits:

1. Eat slowly and cut food into small pieces.
2. Although the normal tendency is to chew on one side or the other, denture wearers may function better by chewing on both sides at the same time. This helps prevent tipping of the dentures.
3. Avoid, when possible, bringing the lower front teeth forward against the upper front teeth to cut or incise foods. This protects the upper front ridge and prevents denture tipping.
4. If it is necessary to bite using the front teeth, try spreading the tongue against the back of the upper denture to keep it in place.
5. Try chewing vertically (up and down) rather than horizontally (side to side)

Sore Spots

New dentures or recently relined dentures almost always cause some sore spots to develop. These must be relieved during the first couple of post-insertion adjustment appointments. We recommend eating soft foods until the initial sore spots are eliminated. The best home treatment between appointments is to rinse with warm salt water (1/2 teaspoon to 8oz. glass of warm water).

Wearing dentures at night

There is no question that the healthiest policy is to remove dentures for at least 6 hours daily to allow the soft tissues to breathe and recover. For most patients the most convenient time is at night or during sleep. While out of the mouth, they should be soaked in either water or denture cleaning solution. Such a practice will maintain much healthier oral tissues, preserve the ridges and underlying bone, and allow the denture to fit properly.

Cleaning

Any of the commercial denture cleaners can be used. Dentures should be thoroughly cleaned daily with a denture brush or cleaner. It is the meticulous brushing that is most effective in removing bacterial plaque and staining. Do not use toothpaste as it is too abrasive and will scratch the denture. Pastes designed specifically for denture cleaning are acceptable.

A cheap and effective alternative is mild soap combined with diligence (don't forget to thoroughly rinse). Caring for the oral tissues is also important. A soft toothbrush or wash cloth should be used to scrub the tongue, gums, and roof of the mouth. Warm salt water rinsed in the morning and evening are also recommended.

Do not use hot water to soak the denture in since it may result in warpage. Such changes may also result from the denture being exposed to dry air for long periods.

Recall Appointments

Periodic recalls are advised to evaluate the denture and examine the remaining soft tissues. Generally these should be every six months. All dentures (partial and complete) which rest on the soft tissue require periodic relines at intervals of one, two and three years. The frequency of relines depends upon the rate of bone remodeling which occurs and results in denture instability.

Adjustments and repairs

We will provide whatever adjustments that are necessary for six months following delivery of the denture.

Longevity

No dentures are meant to last forever. Generally, six to eight years is the average life span of a well-made prosthesis. The dentures may require a reline every 2-5 years to maintain an ideal fit.

Partial Dentures

Partial denture patients may follow many of the same guidelines outlined above.

Additional points include the following:

1. Do not use bleach based cleaners.
2. Do not bite the appliance into place (this may loosen and break the clasps and teeth).
3. Avoid biting against upper front artificial teeth as they may break rather easily.

Immediate Dentures

If dentures are delivered the day the teeth are removed, remember to leave the denture in place during the first 24 hours or as instructed by your oral surgeon.

Over Dentures

Dentures made over the roots of teeth left in the ridges require extra care. Remember to use a fluoridated toothpaste to clean gums around the remaining roots and the teeth themselves. Flouride rinses and treatments (in-office) are helpful in avoiding new areas of decay. More frequent recalls may be necessary to maintain the remaining teeth.

Implant Overdentures

Pay particular attention to locator plugs and call if you feel a lose in retention or seating problem.

Denture DOs and DON'Ts

- 🦷 Do leave your denture out at night while you sleep or at least 6 hours per day. Your gums need time to rest.
- 🦷 Only use denture adhesives on the advice of your prosthetist or dentist.
- 🦷 Never attempt to adjust, repair, or re-fit your denture yourself.
- 🦷 Do come in for your regular check-ups.
- 🦷 Do not leave your denture to dry out. Place it in water or a commercial cleanser, this will prevent the denture from drying out and distorting.
- 🦷 Do not chew/bite foreign objects (pens, pipes, bones, nails) with your denture, it will break the teeth off the denture.
- 🦷 Don't be a martyr to your denture. A small adjustment can ease what appears to be a big problem.

Please do not hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns you may have.

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