

Denture

Now that you've taken a significant step toward restoring your smile and ability to eat, please take care of your new denture and your mouth by following these tips and home-care instructions.

Remember: New dentures can often feel bulky and awkward at first, which is normal. When we deliver your new dentures, you can expect an initial adjustment period of two to four weeks.

EATING

Dentures are very different from your natural teeth because they aren't anchored in bone; they rest on top of mobile tissue. This means your denture, especially the lower one, can and will move in your mouth when you eat and speak. Just be patient! With time and practice, your muscles will adapt.

A complete set of dentures generates approximately 20 to 25% of the chewing force of natural teeth, so eating with your new dentures will take some getting used to. The following tips should help ease the process:

- Start with soft, easy-to-chew foods such as fish, cheese, eggs, chopped meat, cooked vegetables, ice cream and pudding.
- Take small bites.
- Chew on both sides of your mouth at the same time, which helps stabilize the denture.
- Avoid bringing your lower front teeth forward against your upper front teeth to cut or incise foods. This protects the upper front ridge and prevents denture tipping.
- Try chewing vertically (up and down) rather than horizontally (side to side).
- Slice foods like apples and corn on the cob before eating. Biting into foods is difficult with dentures and tends to dislodge an upper denture.
- If you find it necessary to bite using your front teeth, try spreading the tongue against the back of your upper denture to keep it in place.
- Dentures decrease temperature sensation, so avoid very hot foods and drinks to prevent burns.

SPEAKING

Speech difficulties are very common when wearing a brand-new denture or pair of dentures, especially when pronouncing words containing "s" and "f" sounds. Your ability to function with a complete set of dentures involves neuromuscular skills that take time to develop. All new denture wearers require this adjustment period. The muscles of the tongue, lips, and cheeks must learn to coordinate movement to allow for normal speech. You can speed up this process with practice.

- Practice reading aloud and speaking in front of a mirror.
- You may find it helpful to swallow before speaking to "set" your dentures in place.

SORE SPOTS

Don't panic! Having a few sore spots that require adjustment, especially within the first few days of wearing a new denture, is quite common. Typically, we will see you one to two weeks after delivery to evaluate your gums and adjust the denture as necessary. For some patients, this is the only adjustment necessary; for others, multiple adjustments are needed before the denture is comfortable.

If you develop any sore spots, please do the following:

- Call our office for an appointment so we can make any necessary adjustments to help eliminate sore spots. Be sure to wear your denture the day of your appointment to help us identify the sore areas of your mouth.
- Make a soothing mouth rinse by mixing 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon of salt with 1 cup of warm water. Rinse frequently.

LOOSENESS

If your teeth were extracted immediately prior to receiving your denture, gum shrinkage from the normal healing process will cause it to feel loose over time.

Here are some important things to remember:

- A denture re-line procedure, whether in our office or by the lab, will be necessary once your healing is complete. During a re-line, material is added to the underside of the denture.
- Over time, your denture may need to be re-lined once again to fit more securely against your gums.
- Never try to adjust or repair a denture yourself; doing so could cause irreversible damage to it!

ADHESIVES

Over time, as mentioned above, you'll experience some bone and gum shrinkage, causing your denture to feel loose. When this happens, you may need to use a denture adhesive to help your denture feel more stable. Please check with your doctor if you have had recent oral surgery prior to using adhesives.

CARING FOR YOUR DENTURE

Keeping your denture clean is critical. Just like natural teeth, dentures can build up plaque and tartar that will irritate your gums, stain your denture, and harbor bacteria and fungus. You'll need to clean your denture daily. (Before cleaning, be sure to fill the sink with water or lay a soft towel down – a denture can break if it falls on a hard surface.)

Follow these cleaning tips:

- **Rinse your denture under warm water after each meal to remove plaque and food debris.** Do not use boiling or very hot water – doing so can cause the denture to warp and affect its fit.
- **Soak your denture in water using denture-cleaning tablets to help remove light stains and loosen plaque buildup** (i.e., Polident or Efferdent Dental Appliance Cleaner, available on Amazon or at Walmart/Walgreens/CVS, etc.).
- **Brush your denture daily with a soft denture brush and use denture paste/foam** (i.e., Polident Fresh Cleanse, available on Amazon or at Walmart/Walgreens/CVS, etc.). Regular toothpaste is too abrasive and can cause scratches in the acrylic.
- **After soaking, be sure to rinse your denture thoroughly under warm water before reinserting it into your mouth.**

Additional Tips:

- **Immediate Denture:** If you received your denture the day of your extractions, remember to leave it in place during the first 24 hours.
- **When traveling or if you remove your denture temporarily, always place it in a denture case to keep from losing it.** Never place it on a napkin or

tissue. We have had patients accidentally throw away a denture after placing it on a napkin, paper towel, or tissue for "just a moment."

- **Dog owners: Please keep your denture out of reach of your dog!** We cannot emphasize enough that your dog will think your denture is a chew toy and destroy it given the opportunity!

CARE FOR YOUR MOUTH AND GUM TISSUE

- Give your gums a break! Never sleep with your dentures in place unless we specifically request that you do so. Your dentures should be removed during sleep to allow for better blood circulation to your gums and minimize bone loss.
- When not wearing your denture, always keep it in water or a denture-cleaning solution; otherwise the acrylic will dry out over time, affecting the fit and causing it to become brittle.
- While your denture is out of your mouth, use a damp washcloth or very soft toothbrush with warm water (or warm salt water) to clean your gums. Clean the ridges where your partial sits as well as your tongue, lips, cheeks, and roof of your mouth. Rinsing daily with warm salt water will help keep your gums clean.

For implant supported dentures:

- **Brush inside your mouth at least twice daily. Be sure to focus on keeping your implant areas clean and free of food buildup.** Although dental implants cannot decay, periodontal disease may still develop without good home care.

REMEMBER

- **We will want to check your denture at least once annually.** Changes in your mouth, such as shrinking and bone loss, will occur over time. Careful maintenance and routine checkups will help slow down these changes.
- **An oral cancer exam is recommended once yearly.**

A new denture always feels a little strange when first placed in your mouth. Several days or even a few weeks is a normal amount of time for you to become accustomed to it. If you follow our guidelines for home care, you should be able to enjoy many successful years of wearing your denture.

If you have any questions about your new denture or need an adjustment, please call our office to schedule an appointment. We're here to help!