

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETE DENTURES

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This packet contains care instructions and general knowledge related to denture wearing. As comprehensive as this packet may seem, there are variables with denture wear that cannot be predicted. If you have any questions regarding anything in this packet or about denture wear before you receive your dentures or after you start wearing them, please do not hesitate to call the office and ask. We are here to make sure that your denture wearing experience is as good as it can be.

Wearing

Never wear your dentures at night to bed. You will hear some of your friends say that they wear their dentures at night or that their dentist told them to wear their dentures at night. We do not feel, however, that you should wear them while sleeping at night as research shows that the gums stay healthier if the dentures are left out at night. Also, you will not get used to the dentures any faster by wearing them day *and* night. Some people do not want their spouse or other family members to see them without their dentures so they sleep with their dentures in their mouth. If you do sleep with your dentures in your mouth, then you should keep them out of your mouth for at least eight hours the next day.

Keep a journal of what actions make your dentures uncomfortable to wear. This allows us to pinpoint the areas that are causing the problems and make the necessary adjustments to get you as comfortable as we can.

Keep your dentures immersed in clean, fresh water when they are not in your mouth.

Cleaning

Dentures will break if dropped. It is a good idea to fill the sink or bowl half full with water before cleaning them. That way, if the denture slips out of your hand and drops into the sink or bowl, the chance of harm is much less. If there is metal on your denture, keep in mind that the metal can bend and distort and these changes could affect how the denture fits and functions.

Dentures should be cleaned after every meal if possible. If full cleaning is not possible, a thorough rinse with clean water is encouraged. Clean them by using a soft tooth brush or denture brush for cleaning. Denture brushes and denture cleaning products can be found in any pharmacy. Never use regular toothpaste to clean your denture as this can result in abrasive scratching that can increase the amount of bacteria that live on the denture.

Never use abrasive detergents like Ajax, Comet, or Lava soap. Only cleaners specifically designed for use with dentures should be used.

If there is metal on your denture, make sure that you use chlorine free or metal safe denture cleaners.

If you smoke or drink coffee/tea on a frequent basis, your dentures will stain more easily and may require more frequent cleaning.

Sore Areas

You may develop some sore spots. We expect some sore spots to develop as you get used to your new dentures (even if this is not your first set of dentures). For this reason, we encourage you to return on a regular basis for adjustments throughout the first few weeks. Even if you do not have a sore spot, it is important to return every so often so that other potential problems may be spotted. **Do not try to adjust the dentures yourself.** Doing so can cause the denture to become compromised. Any damage done by self adjusting will be repaired at your cost.

Even after you are used to the dentures (this usually takes several weeks), sore spots may develop. This can be due to normal or abnormal changes in your bone and gums. The mouth can change but the dentures do not. It is important to note that as your mouth changes, it does not necessarily mean that you need new dentures. You may only need a slight adjustment or reline.

We will adjust your dentures in an attempt to make them as comfortable as possible. This will be done several times for the first several weeks after you receive your dentures. After this period is complete, we will continue to see you as needed for adjustments, periodic examinations, and refitting or remaking of the dentures. All minor adjustments will be made at no charge for the first two weeks after you receive your new dentures (this adjustment period will be forfeited if you attempt to make alterations yourself).

Eating

Due to the differences between natural teeth and dentures, biting into foods with the front teeth on your dentures may not be possible. Some people can learn to bite through foods with the front teeth of their dentures, and if you learn to do so, consider it a bonus. If you do not, then don't worry, the anatomy of your mouth and limited amount of bone present may make such a function impossible.

Start with soft foods and gradually (over the course of weeks and months) move to harder and harder foods. Your dentures will allow you to eat and stay nourished. However, your dentures or not natural teeth and will not allow you to eat every food that you had previously enjoyed. Even if this is not your first set of dentures, bone changes over the years may make it impossible for you to enjoy the same foods you have in the past.

Cut your food into small pieces with a knife and fork until you get used to chewing with your new dentures. You may slowly start to bite into soft foods only after you have mastered chewing. Eventually, you may be able to bite into harder and harder foods. Don't despair, however, if it takes several months or doesn't happen at all. Remember, dental implants are always an option available to you (as long as you meet minimum bone requirements) to help hold the dentures in place and allow you to bite and chew a more diverse selection of foods.

When getting used to your new dentures, place the food on **both sides of your back teeth evenly** and chew slowly. Chewing with food on both sides helps to keep the denture from coming loose. The longer you wear your dentures, the more natural eating and chewing will become.

Speech

You will most likely have difficulty saying 's' and 't' sounds for the first few days/weeks after you receive your new dentures. If you have difficulty speaking, practice reading a book or newspaper out loud for at least 30 minutes a day. The more you practice, the faster you will overcome any speech difficulty.

Oral Hygiene

It is just as important to keep your gums and tongue clean as it is to keep your dentures clean. Use a soft toothbrush or a clean washcloth and scrub your gums and tongue lightly whenever you clean your dentures. This helps get food and plaque off your gums and tongue, keeps your mouth feeling fresh, and prevents bad breath or infection.

If you still have natural teeth, it is important to keep them clean by brushing and flossing them several times a day.

Denture Adhesives

Do not use and powder or paste to hold the dentures in your mouth. As you know, we went through a lot of preparation and adjustment to make sure that your dentures fit without adhesive. The use of adhesives may cause bone loss under your dentures and can cause the denture to become even looser. Repairing an ill fitting denture because of adhesive induced bone loss will be done at your own cost.

Saliva

You will notice a lot of saliva in your mouth when first wearing your dentures. This is normal. Your body will eventually get used to having dentures and the saliva flow will become normal. This may take several days to several months.

Self Adjusting

If you attempt to repair or adjust your dentures yourself, you will be responsible for any costs associated with fixing any damage done (including the full cost of making a new denture if required).

Periodic Checks

These dentures will not last you the rest of your life. You will lose bone slowly from now until you die. This is due to the absence of teeth in your jaw. This is a natural occurrence and can only be stopped by having implants placed in your jaw. The speed that you lose bone depends on many unpredictable factors. Once bone is lost, it is very difficult to get back (and involves major surgery). To prevent unnecessary bone loss, it is very important to have your mouth checked at least once a year for the remainder of your life. If you have enough bone loss to require a reline or adjustment of your denture, routine examination will uncover this and allow your mouth (bone included) to stay at peak health as long as possible.

An average denture will function for five years. Yours may only last three or less or may last seven or more. Because of the unpredictable lifespan of a denture, it is very important that you have a yearly examination for the remainder of your life.

Home Reliners and Repair Kits

Do not attempt to repair or reline your dentures at home. Any attempt to alter or repair your dentures can be dangerous to your health. It is always best to have a dentist make any repairs or alterations. That way, you can be assured that your dentures fit and function properly and that your mouth remains healthy.

Wearing Hints

Keep your tongue along the inside of your lower front teeth at all times if possible with a lower denture. This will help hold the lower denture in place.

When trying to bite with the front teeth, push in when biting.

Be careful yawning, sneezing, coughing, or laughing loudly with your mouth wide open. These dentures were made to fit during most of the normal mouth movements. The preceding movements may dislodge your dentures. Covering your mouth during these movements is advised.

Patience and time are the best tools you have while getting used to your dentures.

Last, but not least, have patience. Getting used to wearing dentures can be difficult at times and the progression of learning to chew and speak again (especially if this is your first set of dentures) can seem like it is taking forever. A little patience can go a long way when it comes to denture wear.

Remember, this guide contains a lot of information but may not be complete. If you have any problems or issues with your dentures, please do not hesitate to call. The number one reason patients are unhappy with their dentures is that they don't tell the doctor about a problem they are having because they assume that nothing can be done. Sometimes this is the case, but most of the time minor denture problems can be fixed quickly and easily. Never feel embarrassed or reluctant to approach us with denture issues, it is what we are here for!