

Instructions for Your New Dentures

Initial Sensations

When you first begin to wear your dentures, they may feel loose. Until you have learned to keep them in place with the muscles of your cheeks and tongue, they may tip when you chew, allowing food or liquids to pass under them.

No matter how thin the dentures are, they will feel bulky. They may make your tongue feel crowded or may cause a slight gagging sensation. Until your gum ridges are used to supporting dentures, your mouth may feel sore or irritated. Your saliva flow may also increase temporarily.

After a few weeks, as your oral tissues become adjusted to wearing dentures, these problems should decrease. If you continue to experience irritation or excessive soreness in any area, you should see your dentist.

Appearance

When you first get dentures, your facial expression may seem different. A more normal expression will return when the muscles of your cheeks and lips adapt to the dentures.

Dentures may improve your appearance by changing the shape of your face, and reducing facial creases.

Eating

When you are first learning to use your dentures, it is best to eat soft foods. Cut your food into small pieces and chew slowly on both sides with your back teeth to keep your dentures from tipping. After a few days, when your dentures are feeling more comfortable try coarser and harder foods until you are able to eat a more normal diet. **Learning to chew with dentures takes practice!**

Speaking

Sometimes, wearing dentures can make a difference in the way you pronounce certain words. To help overcome any speech difficulties, practice reading aloud. If the denture teeth click together when you talk, speak more slowly. Bring any problems to the attention of your dentist.

At first, you may find that your dentures become loose when you laugh, or cough, or even smile. To reposition them, close your teeth together gently and swallow.

Caring for Your Mouth

Even with dentures, you still need to take care of your mouth. Each day before inserting your denture, brush your gums, tongue and palate with a soft-bristled brush, to remove plaque and to stimulate circulation. **You should always take your dentures out before bed at night, and put them back in the morning. This gives your mouth a chance to rest and helps maintain oral health.** Visit your dentist regularly (even if you no longer have any natural teeth) for a complete oral

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examination. Besides checking your dentures, the dentist will check for signs of oral cancer, and examine your gum ridges, tongue, palate and jaw joints (TMJ).

Caring For Your Dentures

For a healthy mouth and fresh breath, clean plaque and food deposits from your dentures daily. This also helps keep the dentures from becoming permanently stained.

Dentures should be handled carefully! Dropping them (even a few inches into the sink) can break the denture base or a tooth. When cleaning or inserting your dentures, hold them over a towel or a basin half-filled with water. And always keep your dentures out to the reach of children and pets.

Before brushing your dentures, rinse them well to remove any loose particles. Next, apply your favorite denture cleaner to a moistened brush and clean all surfaces of the dentures. Brush thoroughly but carefully. Scrubbing too hard can damage the plastic parts of the denture or bend metal clasps.

Many special denture-cleaning agents are available (ask your dentist about them), follow their instructions carefully. Some people prefer to use hand soap, a mild dishwashing liquid or baking soda. Household cleaners and some toothpastes should not be used because they are too abrasive.

Never use bleach on your dentures!

If your dentures become dry, they may change shape. When you take your dentures out at night, place them in a container of denture-cleaning solution or water. **Never** put dentures in hot water, they can warp.

If your dentures break, crack or chip, or if a denture tooth becomes loose, call your dentist immediately. We can usually repair your dentures, but try to save the broken pieces.

Long-Term Denture Success

Although your dentures (if cared for properly) will keep their shape, your mouth continues to change. The bone and gum ridges that support your dentures can recede or shrink. If ridge shrinkage occurs, your dentures will begin to feel loose and less stable, and your ability to chew may decrease.

Prolonged use of ill fitting dentures can irritate the gums, tongue and cheeks and cause the ridges of the mouth to shrink to the point where it will be almost impossible to fit them with normal dentures.

To prevent or correct these problems, you should see your dentist regularly.

Your success in wearing dentures depends on **you!** With a positive attitude, persistence and regular check-ups, you can become one of the millions of people who wear dentures successfully.