

Advice to Patients Who Have Just Received New Dentures

Whether you have worn a denture before, or you have only just been fitted with one, it is worth reading about some of the things which you may experience, and some of the ways to make sure your new teeth are a success.

The way they feel and make you feel

New dentures are bound to feel strange, even if they have been made to closely resemble your own natural teeth or some previous dentures. You may feel that they are enormous, and that you are making excessive quantities of saliva, also that your speech is not clear. These sensations should lessen over a few days as your mouth gets used to the feel of the new teeth.

You may also feel that it will be obvious to everyone you meet that you are wearing new dentures! Remember, most people that you meet throughout the day take you 'on face value'. They are interested in you, not specifically your teeth. So don't tell them there is anything new and it is most likely they will not even realise. People who know you well may notice that you are 'looking well', but often they cannot work out what it is that has improved your appearance.

Controlling your new teeth

None of us is born knowing how to wear dentures. There are some skills which have to be learned in order to be able to use them well. Mostly these skills are learned automatically but very occasionally it can be difficult for some people. While the muscles of the tongue, cheeks, and lips etc. are getting to grips with learning how to hold your dentures in place it can be very helpful to use a denture fixative to help things. This is particularly the case with a complete lower denture which relies solely on muscular control to keep it in place. Some people find that fixative gives them added confidence with their teeth even when they have got used to them. There are several different types of fixative, which one you use is very much a matter of personal preference. However, it is important to read the instructions to be sure that you are getting the maximum effect, and remember that 'a little fixative is good, but a lot is not better' – too much can be less effective than a small amount used in the right way, and it is also wasteful and very messy!

Speaking and eating

Some speech sounds, particularly 'S' and 'Sh' are affected by the shape that the tongue makes against the teeth and palate at the front of the mouth. If the position of the teeth is altered slightly, or the palate is changed in shape it can take a little while for the tongue to learn how to make the right shape to make the sound come out absolutely correctly. Try reading aloud to practice. Things will

improve quickly, but only if you give them the chance to – they will not improve if you keep going back to an old set of teeth.

Similarly with eating. It is not sensible to expect to be able to manage very hard chewy or sticky foods immediately with new dentures. You need to get used to the new feel, and how the teeth work for you. So choose relatively soft tasty foods to start with, and don't try to eat too fast. Another tip is to avoid piling your plate too high. If hot food gets cold because you're eating slowly then it's not appetising anymore. Better to go for 'seconds' if you still feel hungry, and enjoy the whole meal.

Cleaning your denture

It is very important to keep your new teeth clean. It will help keep them looking good and your mouth feeling fresh. It will also help keep your mouth healthy.

It is wise to clean your dentures over a bowl or basin of water, in case you drop them. The water will cushion the fall and help prevent breakage due to impact. Otherwise, the teeth are quite robust enough to withstand thorough cleaning! First brush the dentures all over with a softish brush to remove any obvious particles of food etc. from them. Make sure you brush the surface which fits against the inside of your mouth as well as the surface which holds the teeth. Ordinary soap is suitable for this process, or you can use a special denture cleaning paste, such as Dentucreme. Ordinary toothpaste used for natural teeth can be a bit abrasive for dentures in the long term so it is best avoided, but is O.K. occasionally if you find that's all you've got!

At least once a day, it's a good idea to soak a denture in a solution which will 'deep-clean' it. Steradent is a well-known brand, but lots of shops eg Boots. Superdrug etc. make their own which are just as good (and sometimes good value too!). There is now available a product which will do the job in just 3 minutes, so there is no need to be without your teeth for a prolonged period while they soak.

Never use hot water for the cleaning/soaking procedure – over time it bleaches the gum-work of the denture to a lovely snowy-white!

Wearing them at night

Lots of people leave their dentures out overnight. This may be because they feel they want to, or because their dentist has told them they must do so. If you feel you wish to leave your dentures out at night, then by all means do, but make sure they are kept moist overnight.

However, you may feel that leaving out your replacement teeth at night is not something that you want to do. If so, unless your mouth is being made sore by the dentures and the dentist has specifically advised against wearing them for a period, then as long as the dentures are kept clean, and your mouth is healthy, then wear them when you wish. Just make sure that you have your mouth and dentures regularly checked.

Sore spots

New dentures are made to fit your mouth closely, but because the models of your mouth are made with you sitting still, and there are many different movements of the mouth which occur during normal function (speaking, eating, kissing etc), there may be some parts of the dentures which press on parts of the mouth during function and make the mouth sore. These areas are often only discovered once you start to wear the new teeth.

Please don't despair. The dentist should have given you an appointment to see how things are going with your new teeth, and it should be possible then to make any minor adjustments to take account of these sore spots which become apparent, so you can wear the new dentures comfortably. In the meantime, don't leave the dentures in all the time making your mouth really sore, either go back to your old dentures temporarily, or wear the new ones just for short periods.

It is very important to wear the new dentures to your next appointment with the dentist, even if you can only put them in a couple of hours before the appointment. Bring your old dentures too, if you have some, but wear the new ones. This is because it will help the dentist see where the troublesome areas are.

Regular mouth health checks

It is important to have your mouth checked regularly, at least annually, for health, even if you do not have any natural teeth. At the same time, the dentist can check the fit and continuing suitability of your dentures. Unfortunately, dentures do wear out over a period of time, but because you wear them every day, you become used to the feel of them, and may not notice that they are not fitting so well or working so efficiently. If such dentures are kept overlong, it can be very difficult indeed to get used to a brand new set eventually, and changes in the mouth can occur which make things even more difficult. It is much the best to avoid this happening by getting the regular checks required from a local dentist.

It is also very important to get things checked out by a dentist if you develop a sore spot under your dentures which won't resolve after two weeks, or if you develop a swelling or ulcer (even if it doesn't hurt), which fails to go away by itself in two weeks.

Old sets of dentures

It is not always helpful to compare sets of dentures with each other outside your mouth. You may find that there are different numbers of teeth on different dentures, and the shape of different sets may be very varied. Remember that the mouth changes shape after tooth loss, and continues to alter slowly over time. Also, one of the reasons for needing new dentures is often that the previous set is no longer working as well as it should. So it would not make sense for a new set to be exactly the same as an old set, or it wouldn't be addressing these issues.

However, it is always worth while keeping your last set of dentures (if you have some) as an emergency 'spare' set. Other sets of teeth which are worth keeping are any sets which you particularly liked in the past because of their appearance or fit, or conversely any sets which were particularly unsuitable. This information could be useful to a dentist in the future, when you need some new dentures, because there may be some design features which work well for you which can be copied in a new set of teeth, whilst changing others.

Patient Advice on Immediate Dentures

Put simply an immediate denture is a denture planned and made before you have teeth extracted. It will be fitted straight after your teeth come out. Often patients worry about looking “gappy” after an extraction. We provide this service so that you can have a tooth put straight into the gap rather than waiting for everything to fully heal. It is not provided as a long term solution.

Once you have decided to have your teeth extracted and an immediate denture made, your dentist will arrange an appointment to take some impressions of your mouth. You will not be able to look at your new denture in place until the final visit after the teeth have been removed, but we will work with you to select the best colour for your new teeth.

On the day of your extraction appointment you will be numbed thoroughly before any teeth are removed. As soon as your teeth are out your immediate denture will be placed in your mouth. On occasion some minor adjustments are needed. Naturally things will feel very different at first and for the first 24 hours your new denture may feel tight because your gums are swollen. We would advise






you to leave your new denture in overnight on this first day but to remove and clean it and leave it out every night after that.

It will take a while to adjust to your new denture and at first you may notice increased saliva and you could even gag a little as it may feel bulky. Your tongue will feel crowded and you might have difficulty speaking normally. This will correct itself with time and practise.

As your bone heals over the next weeks/months your gums will shrink which in turn will make your denture feel loose. When this happens in certain cases at an extra cost we can reline your denture to help improve its fit in the short term. Everyone is different so it is hard to predict how long this will last before your denture begins to feel loose again and in most cases patients who have had an immediate denture will need a new one made within a few months after the initial extractions so it is a good idea to plan for this financially.






Adapting to your dentures

Now that you have your new denture/s, you may notice some differences in your mouth. You may experience the following:


-  You feel you have less room for your tongue
-  Eating hard foods will be difficult
-  Food tastes different
-  You may feel less confident to speak or laugh
-  You produce more saliva than normal


These are completely normal reactions. They are a result of a new denture being fitted to your gums and will disappear in time, once you (and your mouth) get used to your dentures.

Tips for adapting to your dentures

-  **Your denture may seem big** – this is because the new denture is a shape that your not used to. Don't worry. This will improve as you get used to your denture.
-  **Wear your dentures all the time** – your dentist may advise you to wear your denture all the time for several days, to help you to adapt. Follow the advise of your dentist in this matter.
-  **Eating and drinking**- try to avoid foods with pips or seeds as these can get trapped under the denture. Take care with very hot and cold foods. Your sense of taste may feel impaired, but you will quickly adapted.
-  **Biting and chewing** – avoid biting too hard with the front teeth or biting off too much food in one go. When you bite, push the food up against the front of your teeth so that the denture is held in place. Try to chew slowly and evenly with both sides of the mouth, to ensure that there is an even pressure on both sides. Try soft, non-sticky food to start with.
-  **Speaking and hearing**- practice speaking by reading aloud in front of a mirror to give you confidence. Bite and swallow before you start speaking to make sure your denture is in the right position.

Much of the sound of your own voice is carried to our ears through vibrations in the jaw and skull bones. Wearing dentures changes how these vibrations are carried, you may sound different to yourself.


 **To remove your dentures – Upper** Place your thumb against the edge of your front teeth and press upward and outwards towards your nose. **Lower** Pull gently on your denture while applying a rocking motion.

 **Have patience!** – New dentures take time to get used to, but gradually you will adapt to them and so will your mouth.


Denture Hygiene


Oral hygiene is important for denture wearer too!

Tips

 **Brush your denture** at least once a day with a denture cleaning cream, to remove food debris and plaque

It is best to use a large toothbrush or nailbrush, and clean your denture over a basin of water in case you drop them.

 **Clean your mouth and gums** regularly with a soft toothbrush to keep them in good condition and prevent infection.

 **Leave out at night**

