



YOUR DENTURES

What is an overdenture?

An overdenture may feel awkward for a few weeks until you become accustomed to them. The dentures may feel loose while the muscles of your cheek and tongue learn to keep them in place.

It is not unusual to experience minor irritation or soreness. You may find that saliva flow temporarily increases. As your mouth becomes accustomed to the dentures, these problems should diminish. One or more follow-up appointments with the dentist are generally needed after a denture is inserted. If any problem persists, particularly irritation or soreness, be sure to consult your dentist.

Will dentures change how I speak?

Dentures can be made to closely resemble your natural teeth so that little change in appearance will be noticeable. Dentures may even improve the look of your smile and help fill out the appearance of your face and profile.

Will I be able to eat with my dentures?

Eating will take a little practice. Start with soft foods cut into small pieces. Chew slowly using both sides of your mouth at the same time to prevent the dentures from tipping. As you become accustomed to chewing, add other foods until you return to your normal diet. Continue to chew food using both sides of the mouth at the same time. Be cautious with hot or hard foods and sharp-edged bones or shells.

Will dentures change how I speak?

Pronouncing certain words may require practice. Reading out loud and repeating troublesome words will help. If your dentures "click" while you're talking, speak slower.

You may find that your dentures occasionally slip when you laugh, cough or smile. Reposition the dentures by gently biting down and swallowing. If speaking problem persists, consult your dentist.

How long should I wear my dentures?

Your dentist should provide instructions about how long dentures should be kept in place. During the first few days, you may be advised to wear them most of the time, including while you sleep. After the initial adjustment period, you may be instructed to remove the dentures before going to bed. This allows gum tissues to rest and promote oral health. Generally, it is not desirable that the tissue be constantly covered by denture material.

Should I use a denture adhesive?

A denture adhesive should not be used for a prolonged period. Dentures are made to fit securely. When a denture feels loose it may require relining. A poor-fitting denture may cause irritation and possible sores. Although an adhesive may be used for a short time until you are able to visit your dentist, prolonged use is not usually recommended, except for special situations.

How do I take care of my dentures?

Dentures are very delicate and may break if dropped even a few inches. Stand over a folded towel or basin of water when handling dentures. When you are not wearing them, store your dentures away from children and pets.

Like natural teeth, dentures must be brushed daily to remove food deposits and plaque. Brushing helps prevent dentures from becoming permanently stained and helps your mouth stay healthy. It's best to use a brush designed for cleaning dentures. A toothbrush with soft bristles can also be used. Avoid using hard-bristled brushes that can damage dentures.

Your dentist can recommend a denture cleanser. Some denture wearers use hand soap or mild dishwashing liquid, which are both acceptable for cleaning dentures. Avoid using other powered household cleaners, which may be too abrasive.

The first step in cleaning dentures is to thoroughly rinse away loose food particles. Moisten the brush and apply denture cleaner. Brush every surface, scrubbing gently to avoid damage.

Dentures may lose their shape if they are allowed to dry out. When they are not worn, dentures should be placed in a denture cleanser soaking solution or in water. Your dentist can recommend the best method. Never place dentures in hot water, which could cause them to warp.

Ultrasonic cleansers are also used to care for dentures. However, using an ultrasonic cleaner does not replace a thorough daily brushing.

Can I make minor adjustments or repairs to my dentures?

You can seriously damage your dentures and harm your health by trying to adjust or repair your dentures. A denture that is not made to fit properly can cause irritation and sores.

See your dentist if your dentures break, crack, chip, or if one of the teeth becomes loose. A dentist can often make the necessary adjustments or repairs on the same day. A person who lacks the proper training will not be able to reconstruct the denture. This can cause problems in your mouth. Glue sold over-the-counter often contain harmful chemicals and should not be used on dentures.

Will my dentures need to be replaced?

Over time, dentures will need to be relined, remade or rebased due to normal wear. To make a rebased denture, the dentist uses the existing denture teeth and makes a new denture base. Dentures may need to be replaced because a mouth naturally changes with age. Bone and gum ridges can recede or shrink, causing jaws to align differently. Shrinking ridges can cause health problems, including sores and infections. A loose denture also makes chewing more difficult and may change your facial features. It's important to replace worn or poorly-fitting dentures before they cause problems.

Must I do anything special to care for my mouth?

Even with full dentures, you still need to take good care of your mouth. Every morning, brush your gums, tongue and palate with a soft-bristled brush before you put in your dentures. This removes plaque and stimulates circulation in the mouth. Selecting a balanced diet for proper nutrition is also important for maintaining a healthy mouth.

How often should I schedule dental appointments?

Your dentist will advise you about how often to visit. Regular dental check-ups are important. The dentist will examine your mouth to see if your dentures continue to fit properly. The dentist also examines your mouth for signs of oral diseases including cancer.

When regular professional care, a positive attitude and persistence, you can become one of the million of people who wear their dentures with a smile.