

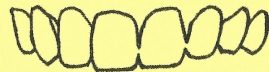
DENTURE WEAR & CARE

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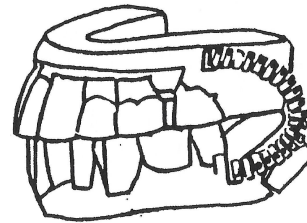
Introduction

There is much confusion about the use and care of dentures. In order for you to receive the most service and satisfaction from a new denture, it is important to understand certain facts about them whether you have worn them before or not. The purpose of this booklet is to help you make the change from your own natural teeth, or a previous denture, to your new denture.

Please read the following pages and you will learn how to care for your dentures and what to expect from them. Keep a pencil handy. Put question marks next to places you want to ask about. Bring the booklet to your next dental appointment.

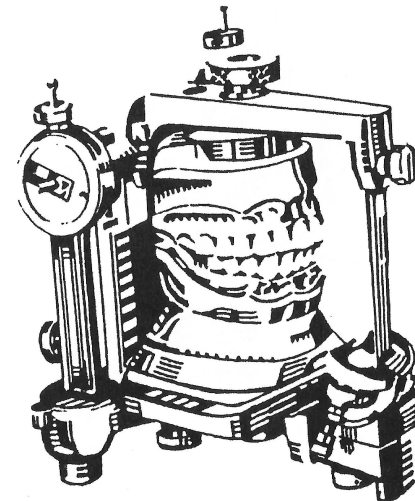


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From the start it must be understood that any denture, whether complete denture or partial denture, whether removable or not, is really a substitute for no teeth at all. No substitute, however carefully made, will ever work as well as the original.

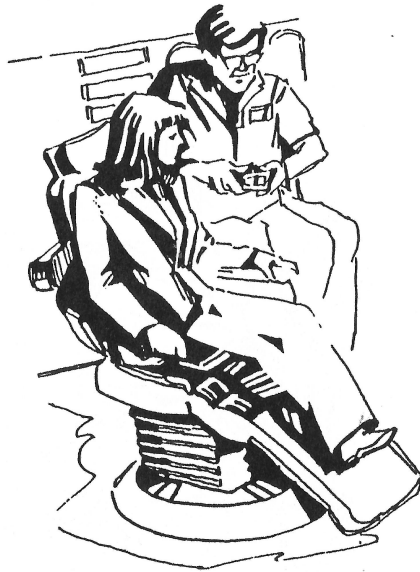
Prosthodontics, the science and art of artificial teeth, has advanced rapidly in recent years. Your dentist, with new materials and methods, can now make you a natural looking denture. The success in wearing the denture is divided; you must accept your share of that responsibility.



Learning to wear dentures takes time, and demands patience and determination. How much time it takes depends on many things; general health, age, individual determination, mental attitude toward patience and perseverance, jaw coordination, number of remaining natural teeth or roots, muscle and tissue tone, size & shape of jaw bones, quality of oral hygiene and home care, diet and nutrition, side-effects from some medications, and even unknown factors. This makes it difficult to say how long it will take a patient to learn to wear new dentures, or predict how well a patient may be able to use them.

Tell your problems to your dentist, who can help you more than any other person. Take your dentist's advice, not the advice of friends or relatives.

Your mental attitude is most important; do not expect too much from your dentures, especially at first. Do not become discouraged, thousands and thousands of people are getting along well with dentures and so can you.



Differences Between Natural Teeth & Artificial Dentures

Dentures are mechanical substitutes for natural teeth. Like all mechanical devices, their use must be learned.

Eating with dentures is quite different from eating with natural teeth. The denture is supported by spongy, slippery wet gum tissue, while natural teeth are firmly anchored in bone.

Natural teeth have nerves and blood in them, they come with the body. A denture is a lifeless, foreign mass.

Natural teeth are individually supported in bone. Although teeth are related, each one is separate. An upper or lower denture works like a SINGLE TOOTH. This single tooth is not rooted in bone like natural teeth. It rests on soft, tender, movable tissue with bone underneath. If too much pressure is put on one side, the entire denture will move, breaking the seal and loosening the denture. That's why food must be chewed with the back teeth on both sides at the same time.

These differences make dentures seem very clumsy when compared to natural teeth. Experiments show that well-fitting dentures, worn by experienced patients, are at best only 20% as effective as natural teeth.



The First Few Days

During the first few days after receiving new dentures, you should expect only to be able to keep them in your mouth. They will feel bulky, or too full, especially if this is the first experience with dentures. This feeling will soon pass as your mouth and tissue become used to the dentures.

You will notice an increase in the amount of saliva at first. After a couple of days your saliva should return to normal. Until then simply swallow more often. Cough drops or hard candy may help.

Please make no attempt to really chew with the new dentures until they begin to feel like part of your mouth and not a bulky foreign mass. After a few days, you may start experimenting with brittle foods such as crackers. Do not become discouraged the first few days. Do not wear your old dentures, it will prolong your discomfort.

The gum tissue under the denture was never meant to be used this way. Some gum ridges are covered with good, tough, thick tissue. This kind of tissue allows patients to wear the denture comfortably and chew with little discomfort.

On the other hand, some gum ridges have a very thin tissue covering, like the skin over a knuckle. Thin skin can not cushion the bone against the denture. The problem is usually worse on the lower ridge. The tissues get sore easily, and it is almost impossible for these patients to wear dentures the usual way and be comfortable.

Chewing a large wad of bubble gum without the dentures can help toughen thin tissues. Also, brushing the gums with a soft toothbrush and salt water will help.

Facial exercises are valuable and help regain and maintain muscle tone. Twisting the nose, lips and neck in every possible direction is excellent. The lower jaw should be moved right, left, forward and wide open, relaxing between each position. Smiling and frowning are also good exercises.



Millions of people wear dentures, but it took time and patience on their part before they became used to the dentures and learned to wear them comfortably.

The First Few Weeks

Your mouth will gradually accept the dentures. After a while your mouth will feel odd or funny when you take them out. You will learn by experimenting that biting in some ways upsets the dentures. Biting in other ways seats them back in place. You should learn to chew on both sides of your back teeth at the same time.

Break or cut a normal bite into two bite-sized pieces. Place one piece on both sides before starting to chew. After a while this becomes a habit. You will not realize you are chewing any different than you did with your natural teeth.

You will not be able to bite on your front teeth without upsetting the dentures or putting too much pressure on the dentures. Biting apples and corn cause the gum to get sore and can make the bone shrink faster. You must learn to cut food or break it before putting it in your mouth. This way, you will not have to really bite on your front teeth.

For most people, the upper denture is easier to get used to than the lower. There is less gum ridge to hold the lower denture, and the tongue is more involved. However, a complete upper denture worn against lower natural teeth is sometimes difficult to master.



Cleaning The Dentures

Dentures are not as self-cleansing as natural teeth, so they should be removed and brushed after each meal. Denture wearers need two toothbrushes, one for brushing the denture and one for brushing the gums and tongue.

For the denture, select one with the brush tapered on one side for getting into all the hard to reach places.

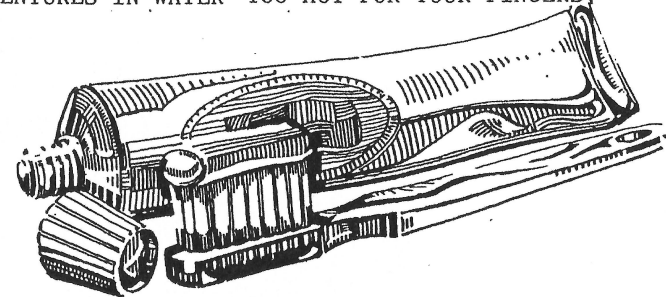
You may use toothpaste or face soap to clean your dentures. Fill the sink half-full of water before brushing the dentures. Wet, soapy dentures are slippery and easily dropped. No one ever broke the sink by dropping a denture in it.

Hold the denture on one side only, because if you grasp it at both ends and squeeze too hard it can break.

After cleaning your dentures, you should brush your gums and tongue with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste. Small bits of food get stuck in tiny grooves on your tongue and gums. If the food is not cleaned away bacteria will dissolve the bits of food and cause soreness and irritation. Brushing gums also helps the blood flow and makes the gums tougher.

Use the toothpaste you think has the best flavor. You may want to rebrush the dentures with toothpaste to remove all flavor of soap.

NEVER PUT DENTURES IN WATER TOO HOT FOR YOUR FINGERS!



DENTURE CLEANER
(for complete dentures only)

1 tablespoon of Clorox
2 tablespoons of Calgon
1/2 pint of water

Mix the above ingredients together in a bowl or glass and soak the dentures in the solution for 15 minutes, once a week. Occasionally soak them overnight. You may use denture tablets if you wish. Soaking in cleanser will freshen your dentures, it is not a substitute for regular brushing. Once a month soak the dentures in vinegar for an hour.

Partial dentures should be soaked in plain water only unless your dentist recommends a brand of cleanser that won't corrode the metal parts of the partial denture.

SOFT LINERS also must be cleaned differently. Temporary soft liners (clear or white) should not be soaked in water. When not being worn, place the denture teeth-side down in a denture bath with 1/4 inch of water. Use only a soft brush on the soft lining, and do not soak in tablets.

Long-term soft liners (pink or red) can be brushed with a regular denture brush, but should not be soaked in water. Follow instructions for temporary soft liners. Long-term soft liners may be soaked in Kleenite brand denture cleanser once a week. Do not soak soft liners in vinegar, denture tablets or the above recipe.

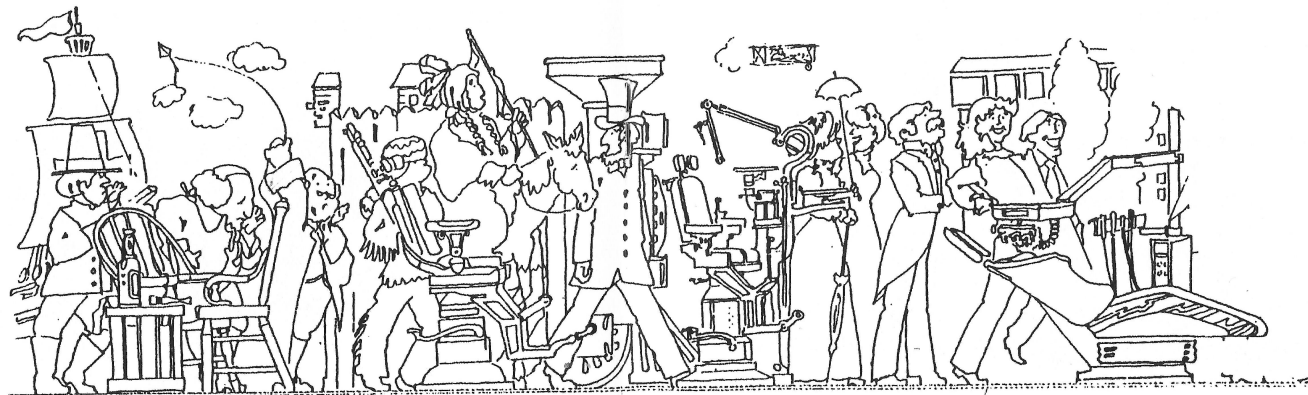
Wearing The Dentures

Dentures must remain out of the mouth for six to eight hours during every 24 hour period, to allow the mouth to rest up from wear and tear of denture pressures. Some dentists tell their patients to wear their dentures around the clock. However, recent research has shown that many denture patients with red or sore mouths are patients who do not remove their dentures except for cleaning.

If you are uncomfortable sleeping without your dentures, leave them out during the day for a few hours at a time. The dentures should be placed in clean water when not in the mouth.

If you accidentally leave them out of water, the dentures will dry out and warp or twist slightly. If this happens, soak the dentures in clean water for one hour and try them in again. The dentures usually return to the original shape. If not, consult your dentist.

!!!Don't grit your teeth!!! Some people gnash or grind their teeth and this is a bad habit. As one well-known dentist says: "From this rule do not depart, lips together, teeth apart."



Adjustments

When new dentures are placed, adjustments or corrections are almost always necessary before the dentures become comfortable. As the tissue and muscles adapt to the dentures, there will be places the tissue cannot quite stretch enough, resulting in soreness or movement. As the dentures settle into the most comfortable position, the teeth may begin to bite together differently. This can result in soreness or difficulty in chewing or swallowing.

These problems may be corrected by adjusting the dentures, but depend on many things; the patient's age, health, diet, and others. The number of adjustments needed is not related to the accuracy or fit of the mouth impressions.

Always do your utmost to leave the denture in place 18-24 hours prior to your adjustment visit.



!!!!WARNING!!!!WARNING!!!!WARNING!!!!

Some mechanically-minded patients are tempted to whittle or file on their dentures. The dentures are your property and if you want to take responsibility for them, it is your privilege. However, if you take this responsibility, the success or failure of the dentures is your responsibility from then on.

Do not expect your dentist to adjust dentures you have attempted to fix. Do not expect your dentist to remake them, should you ruin them.

Servicing The Dentures

Modern denture materials are very stable and do not change shape over the months and years. However the tissue and bones of the mouth DO change, and some patient's mouths change faster than others.

When teeth are extracted, the gum and bone around the tooth roots (sockets) slowly heal over. It takes nearly a year for the gum ridge to round over completely. Even after that the gum ridge will shrink, very slowly, for the rest of your life.

Since the denture is supported by soft tissue, the denture often needs refitting or replacement after a period of time. Also, the bite may need occasional correcting.

You should visit your dentist for regular check-ups. One important reason for check-ups is to look for early signs of Oral Cancer. Your dentist will also clean your dentures professionally at the check-up appointment.

If your denture gets broken, or the teeth chip, see your dentist for repairs. Don't fix it yourself.



Gagging

Many patients have a gagging feeling when new dentures are first placed. This is mostly a mental reaction that will soon pass. It is one of the discomforts the patient must overcome on their own.

The dentist determines how long the denture border or edge should be according to the shape of the mouth and throat. If the dentist shortens the denture too much, the denture will lose the seal or suction, and the denture will loosen.

Patience and perseverance will overcome the gagging difficulty. Don't be discouraged, thousands of others have gone through this difficulty and overcome it. You can do it too.

Speech

Difficulty in speaking is another hurdle that must be overcome with patience and practice. The most common fault is a tendency to whistle on "s" sounds. This can be corrected by holding the tongue lower, near the edge of the teeth.

Speak slowly at first, speed will come with practice. Practice alone speaking or reading out loud until you build confidence. New habits of tongue movement in speaking must be learned, since you need to get used to the shape of the denture. HINT: talk less and listen more.

If you have a tape recorder, say something on tape and listen to it. You may be surprised how much different you sound as others hear you.

Chewing of Food

The biggest problem for most people is relearning to eat. Your old eating habits developed over many years. They must be broken and new habits quickly formed. Remember, you now have a movable substitute for teeth that were once firmly anchored in bone.

For the first few weeks, eat mainly soft foods, especially if this is your first denture. Hard foods combined with unskilled chewing will cause sore spots no matter how excellent the dentures may be.

Learn to eat in stages. First, learn to swallow. Then learn to chew. Practice on foods that normally require little chewing, such as whipped potatoes, ground beef, shredded ham, chopped tuna or cole slaw until you get the feel of chewing with new dentures.

Once you have mastered these two stages, and only then, move on to the more difficult job of biting or incising food. Don't rush yourself. You first learned to crawl, and then stand up, before you learned to walk.

While eating with natural teeth, your tongue would shift the food from side to side during chewing until ready for swallowing. Now you must attempt to divide the food so that chewing will be done on both sides at once. This will help prevent rocking the denture loose.

Avoid tearing or breaking foods with your teeth. Stay away from biting hard bread, raw fruit or vegetables, especially at first. Cut them into small bite-sized pieces and enjoy chewing them.

Remember; eat slowly, take smaller bites, and above all be patient. Practice takes time. Please wear the dentures at meal time even if you have some difficulties. Don't fall back on the crutch of the old denture or do without if this is your first denture. This would only confuse your mouth and prolong the adjustment period.

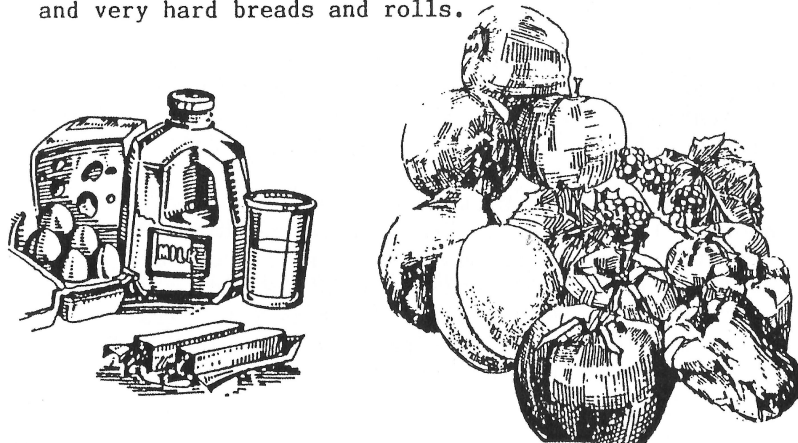
Diet



For the first few days with your new denture, do not attempt to eat any solid foods that require chewing. However, be selective about your soft diet. Many patients eat too many carbohydrates, high in calories. A well-balanced diet should contain some daily portion of the following types of food: milk, eggs, butter, cereal, fowl or fish, vegetables, both cooked and raw, and two or three quarts of liquid per day.

Only a well-balanced diet will keep your body running in top form. Vitamin pills are usually not needed, if you are eating a well-balanced meal, but you may want to add a daily glass of Carnation Instant Breakfast (at most groceries) or some other liquid diet supplement until you're back to eating solid foods.

An electric blender or food processor may be used to liquefy and puree food for the denture patient. Certain foods should be avoided by most denture patients; tough, fibrous meats, raw carrots, hard nuts and very hard breads and rolls.



Adhesive Pastes, Pads & Powders

All successful denture patients have learned chewing and swallowing habits which keep their dentures in place. They have stopped doing those things which dislodge or loosen dentures.

The use of adhesive pads or powders only create false suction, and will prolong habits that are harmful to the mouth tissues and bones.

When a denture begins to loosen, it means the ridge has changed enough to allow the denture to move around. It is the patient, not the denture, that has become loose.

Wearing a loose or poorly-fitting denture can damage your mouth. Using adhesives allows you to wear the dentures longer, damaging your mouth. Loose dentures need the attention of your dentist, not some drug store remedy.

There's no harm in using a little adhesive for special occasions for a few hours. If an adhesive is used, it must be completely cleaned out of the denture each time. Otherwise, a layer of thick, gooey, smell adhesive builds up, and it is impossible to remove without damaging the denture.

Adhesives will not solve the problems that cause your denture to loosen. In fact, the use of adhesive for more than a few weeks will cause even more problems.

If your dentures do not fit properly, see your dentist, not your druggist. Powders, pads and pastes are not recommended, and can do more harm than good.

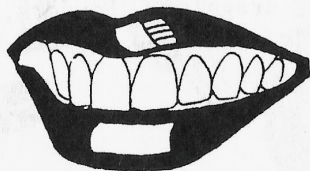
Conclusions

Removable dentures & bridgework are not even close to having healthy, natural teeth and gums, but they are much better than diseased teeth or no teeth at all. Unfortunately, it is a big adjustment to make; new habits will have to be formed.

There will be discomforts in the beginning, and trips back to the dentist. If you must rely on others for transportation, don't use your dentures for an excuse to go somewhere.

Don't worry too much about your teeth, things will get better. It can take months or years to really master wearing dentures.

Success with dentures takes a lot of perseverance and determination on the part of the patient. It is a new skill that must be learned.



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