**Use and Care of Complete and Partial Dentures**

**Wearing:**

* Unless taught otherwise, dentures/partials should not be worn continuously. They should be:
* Left out of the mouth for at least 8 hours per day to let the oral tissues rest; and,
* Worn at least 8 hours per day to ensure their fit and function.
* When your dentures/partials are out of your mouth, they should be kept in a moist environment. Place the dentures/partials into the container provided and add a small amount of water.
* Do not place the dentures/partials in direct sunlight or on anything that produces heat.
* Keep the denture/partial away from pets.
* You can gain confidence in your ability to speak by reading out loud in front of a mirror.
* Do not expect your dentures to function as well as your natural teeth once did. Dentures only function about 25% as efficiently as natural teeth.
* Moisture serves as a natural adhesive. Drink water or use saliva supplements if you have a dry mouth.

**Cleaning:**

* ***Complete dentures*** should be cleaned daily by brushing with a non-abrasive cleaner (dish detergent is OK) and by soaking dentures in a commercial denture cleaner according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
* Denture cleaners should only be used to clean dentures outside the mouth.
* Dentures should always be rinsed well with water after soaking and brushing before putting them back in your mouth.
* ***Partial dentures*** should be removed after every meal and snack, and you should:
* Brush the remaining natural teeth as usual with a regular toothbrush; and,
* Brush food particles from the partial denture, (with a denture toothbrush if available), over a basin of water or a washcloth to prevent potential damage to the denture if it is dropped.
* To avoid damaging the dentures/partials:
* **Never** place in boiling water;
* **Never** place in the microwave oven; or,
* **Never** soak in bleach for more than 10 minutes.
* Dentures/partials should be stored immersed in water after cleaning when not in the mouth.
* If your denture/partial has a soft liner, use a very soft brush and gently scrub the tissue bearing surface.

**Eating:**

* Eat a soft diet for the first 7 - 10 days.
* While you get used to your dentures, cut your food into smaller pieces. Take small bites and eat slowly.
* It is very important to chew your food on both sides of your mouth at the same time to balance the dentures.
* Front denture teeth are primarily for looks. It is rare to be able to eat foods like corn-on-the-cob and apples without difficulty.
* Keep in mind that a *complete lower* denture is rarely as secure as a *complete upper* denture; a *complete upper* denture can obtain suction where the lower cannot. The retention of a *partial* denture depends upon the number and position of remaining anchor teeth.
* Denture adhesives, when properly used, can improve the retention and stability of the denture/partial and help seal out food particles beneath the denture/partial.
* Creams and powders are advised over pads and cushions.
* Follow all manufacturer’s instructions when using adhesives.
* Adhesives should be thoroughly removed from the dentures and the gums every day before storing the denture outside the mouth.

**Potential Problems:**

* Compared to normal teeth, with dentures you should expect less biting force and a loss of touch and temperature sensations.
* You may also experience increased saliva, speech problems, and/or biting cheeks and tongue. These problems will normally resolve within 6 - 8 weeks and with habitual use of the dentures.
* All dentures produce sore spots. When sore spots occur, you may remove your dentures and rinse your mouth with warm salt water. Call the clinic for a denture adjustment and wear your dentures the day you are scheduled for the adjustment to make the denture sore(s) more obvious. It is important to never attempt to correct the problems yourself.

The clinic hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. If after hours, please call (828) 299-2513 and leave a voice message with your name, telephone number and last 4 digits of your social security number. Someone will return your call the next business day. You can also contact us through Secure Messaging.



Approved by the Veteran Education Workgroup: August 2020