

Rehabilitation with Complete Dentures

Things to keep in mind

1. Adaptation period

- a. Your current oral condition is unique. The experience of other denture patients' occurred under different circumstances and should therefore not be compared.
- b. Getting use to your new dentures will take time. Do not expect results for several weeks or even a month.
- c. The length of time it will take to adapt to your new complete dentures is modified by age. It is more difficult for older patients' to adapt to new complete dentures.
- d. During this adaptation period you will likely experience:
 - i. Sore spots
 - ii. Difficulty eating
 - iii. Difficulty speaking
 - iv. Check/lip biting
 - v. Frustration

2. Eating with complete dentures

- a. Dentures are poor substitutes for natural teeth. The shape of your jaw bones without teeth makes it very difficult to keep dentures in place.
- b. Those patients who learn to eat well with complete dentures have learned several helpful techniques:
 - i. When first using new dentures only eat soft foods. Once you begin to learn how to use them you can gradually increase the resistance of the food you eat. Trying to eat steak the first week will result in more sores and blisters.
 - ii. Eating with your front teeth will always cause the dentures to tip. Use your back teeth and bite food off using the corners of your mouth.
 - iii. Use smaller pieces of food.
 - iv. Place one piece of food on either side of your mouth before chewing. By chewing food on both sides of your mouth at the same time you can reduce tipping of the dentures.

3. Speaking

- a. It is common to experience changes in speech. These changes will become less noticeable with time.
- b. Practicing reading aloud will help you adapt to the small changes in speech pattern that have occurred.

4. Adjustment and follow-up appointments

- a. All new dentures require some adjustment. Sore spots and other changes are made during scheduled adjustment appointments.
- b. These return appointments should be planned the day you receive the new dentures. Returning 4 days and/or 7 days after receiving the dentures is common.

5. Care of your tissue

- a. Remove your dentures at night. This allows your gums to heal and recover from wearing the dentures.
- b. Massaging your gums with a soft wet towel or handkerchief will keep them firm, clean, and resistant to denture irritation.
- c. If the gums are not kept clean and firm your dentures will become unstable and more difficult to wear.

6. Care of your dentures

- a. Remove and rinse off your dentures after every meal. Then, rinse your mouth and replace the dentures.
- b. At least once a day:
 - i. Use a denture brush to scrub the dentures clean.
 - ii. Apply a small amount of regular unscented hand or dish soap while brushing under warm water. This will remove debris as well as odor causing bacteria.
 - iii. Leave sink filled with water to protect the dentures if they are dropped.
 - iv. Undiluted bleach or abrasives will damage the dentures, so do not use them.
- c. When removing your dentures at night:
 - i. Keep them wet by soaking them in a safe container.
 - ii. Only soak them after they have been cleaned with a brush as above.
 - iii. Only use accepted denture solutions or plain water. We recommend Stain Away by Regent Labs, but several products work well.
 - iv. Patients susceptible to infections can use the following as a denture soak:
 1. Mix equal parts (50/50) of Biotene Mouthwash and Crest Prohealth Mouthwash. First scrub the denture with this mix and then leave denture soaking in it overnight. Mix fresh at each use.

7. Yearly dental visits

- a. All denture wearers should visit their dentist at least once per 2-year period.