

Rehabilitation with Implant 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. Many denture issues remain, even with implants. It is more difficult for older patients' to adapt to new complete dentures.
- c. Never BITE your implant denture into place. This may damage the snaps and cause it to no longer fit. Squeeze it down with your fingers/thumbs instead.
- d. During this adaptation period you will likely experience:
 - i. Sore spots
 - ii. Difficulty eating and/or speaking
 - iii. Food getting underneath the dentures
 - iv. Check/lip biting
 - v. Frustration with alignment for snapping in/out

2. Eating with complete dentures

- a. Dentures are poor substitutes for natural teeth. Even with the implants, there is a tendency for the back of implant dentures to lift up. You can learn to control this.
- 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. Temporary changes in speech are normal. These changes typically normalize with time. Practicing reading aloud will help you adapt to the small changes.

4. Adjustments

- a. All new dentures require some adjustment. These appointments are confirmed the day you receive the new dentures. Returning 4 and/or 7 days later is common.

5. Care of your tissue

- a. Remove your dentures at night. This allows your gums to heal and recover from pressure.
- b. Massaging your gums with a soft wet towel or handkerchief will keep them firm, clean, and resistant to denture irritation.

6. Care of your dentures

- a. At least once a day:
 - i. Use a denture brush to scrub the dentures clean. Focus on the area where the denture connects to the implants. The brush must go into the small areas.
 - 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.
- b. 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. We recommend KLEENITE – for partial dentures. It is available online if you google Kleenite by Regent Labs, Inc.
 - iv. Reasonably priced, at-home ultrasonic cleaners are available online. Those priced between \$30-60 dollars are the best value. Those marketed for ‘jewelry’ work well if the denture fits and are less costly than dental specific units. Only use denture cleaning solutions that are metal safe. These units are ideal for those who have had hard time brushing well.

7. DAILY Care of your implants

- a. BRUSH the implants clean:
 - i. Twice per day: before you put the denture in and when you take it out
 - ii. Use the regular version ***Crest Pro-Health*** toothpaste (not whitening or tartar control formulas). Brush using a circular motion around the top of each implant or at the gumline along the bar that connects them.
- b. MOUTH WASH: To help keep ‘bad’ bacteria under control, we recommend that you rinse once a day. The rinse is best used after the mouth has been brushed cleaned just prior to bedtime. Use one of the following mouthwashes:

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| Colgate | Total | <i>Alcohol Free</i> |
| Crest | Prohealth | <i>Alcohol Free</i> |

8. Maintenance issues

- a. Wear of snaps/clips/parts: The snap, clip, and eventually the implant abutment will need to be replaced as they wear down. The more you snap the denture in/out the sooner this will be needed. You will know the parts have worn away when the denture is no longer retentive (it gets loose again). On average, this takes about 1 year to happen to any significant degree.
- b. Wear of denture teeth and ridge (gum) resorption will also happen, although usually much more slowly. All implant denture wearers should visit their dentist at least once per year to watch for these and other changes.