

Patients Instructions

Denture aftercare and limitations

Whilst we strive to surpass our patient's expectations we would like to point out that dentures are not a replacement for natural teeth. While the majority of patients will not encounter any problems with our dentures we feel being honest about potential issues is wiser than making excuses after the treatment. In this document you will find a list of potential problems along with common sense ideas for keeping your dentures and your mouth in the best of health.

Limitations of Dentures

- Dentures are less efficient than natural teeth
- Some people can eat all foods easily, but these are the exception
- Generally the better the ridge form, the less problems are encountered. Patients with minimal ridges should be advised that their dentures will likely move (especially the lower jaw) and their efficiency will therefore be reduced
- Patients with minimal ridges will likely encounter more sore spots than others

Adaptation to Dentures

- Because new dentures have usually been changed in some respects to the old dentures (otherwise there would be no need for new dentures), it will take time to adapt to them
- Studies show that it may take 6 to 8 weeks for patients to become optimally adapted to new dentures.

- Adaptability is affected by:

1. Length of time wearing dentures
2. Amount of residual ridge remaining
3. Degree of changes made in new dentures
4. Individual variation (e.g. patients with more acute oral sensory perception have more difficulty adapting)

Adaptation to Chewing may also be affected.

1. This will get better over time
2. As the mouth adapts to the new dentures a slight increase in saliva production may occur. Once again this is normal.

Speaking may also be affected

1. Once again this will improve with time.
2. The tongue can cause initial speaking problems, as it is extremely sensitive to changes in the mouth. It is also extremely adaptable and will become used to the new dentures quickly.

Appearance may be changed in some individuals.

These changes are usually due to:

1. Increasing length of the front teeth if old teeth were worn.
 2. Changes in vertical dimension (if patients old dentures were worn and causing over closing of the mouth)
 3. Improved lip support (Old dentures may have not provided proper lip support causing the upper lip to turn in on itself)
- In most instances these changes in appearance will be beneficial and not of concern to the patient.

Oral Hygiene

a. Dentures:

- Brushing has been shown to be most effective method to remove plaque:

- Use non-abrasive cleanser (commercial pastes, dish detergents, **not regular toothpaste!**)
- Use soft brush with long bristles (less wear)
- Inner and outer surfaces must be cleaned
- Brush over a filled basin or face cloth (protection against damage if dropped)
- Brush after every meal, before bed
- Brush vigorously especially near where the teeth meet the gums.

Chemical cleaners:

- Efferdent, Polident etc. must be used overnight to be effective (15-30 minutes is not sufficient)
- Brushing is more effective (60-80% vs. 20-30% plaque removal compared to soaking alone)
- Combine brushing with soaking for more efficiency

Ultrasonic cleaners:

- True ultrasonic cleaners work well
- “Sonic” cleaners are not effective without chemical cleaner (brushing is more Effective)

b. The Gums

- Remove dentures at night
- Brush Gums with a soft toothbrush and warm tap water, massage all of the tissue -
This will improve health of the gums for the next denture.
- Alternatively use face cloth (less convenient, more pleasant feel, less plaque removed)

Continuing Care

Look after your dentures and they will look feel and function better for longer.

If you have any issues with your dentures contact a dental professional as soon as possible.