

Partial and Denture Care Instructions

J. Richard Burch D.D.S LLC

New wearers often report a "full-mouth" feeling, as though the dentures are too big and pushing the lips forward. This feeling will wear off as you adjust. Your dentures may feel like they don't fit properly at first. They may "gag" you, or cause you to bite your cheeks or tongue. If you wear an upper denture, it may take some time for your tongue to get used to the feeling of being pressed against the denture and not your palate. Don't worry. These problems will lessen overtime. Because a denture is a "foreign object" in the mouth, you may produce more saliva for a while. This, too, will lessen and eventually go away. Something as simple as sucking a mint will encourage you to swallow more frequently, clearing away excess saliva. Some soreness is to be expected, usually within a few hours of putting your dentures in your mouth. However, if soreness becomes a problem, make an appointment with our office for an adjustment. Never try to make adjustments to your dentures yourself. Patience and practice will help you build confidence with the important activities of speaking and eating. When you speak, much of the sound of your own voice reaches your ears through vibrations in the bones of the jaw and skull.

Wearing dentures changes the sound and makes it seem louder. This change will be much less noticeable to others than to you. If your dentures "click" when you speak, try speaking more slowly. Slower speech helps avoid movements that raise or move the lower denture. The muscles of your lips, cheeks, and tongue are learning to keep the denture in place. Time and practice will help overcome this difficulty. For confident speaking try to bite and swallow to position your dentures before you speak. Practice reading aloud in front of a mirror to help your tongue to get used to your dentures. A small amount of denture adhesive like Fixodent will also increase your sense of security. To improve eating, begin with small amounts of food. Instead of biting into food with your front teeth, cut it into smaller pieces. When you put food in your mouth, divide it so that you are chewing one half on the back left side of your mouth and the other half on the back right. This will even out the pressure on your dentures. Start with soft foods such as eggs, fish, chopped meat, cooked vegetables, and puddings. Once you've gained more confidence with your dentures, try tougher foods like steak and celery. At first you may feel that food has lost its flavor. This is because the messages your brain is receiving about your dentures can, for a short time, overpower those from your taste buds.

You may also have trouble sensing how hot food and drinks are at first. Taste carefully so you don't burn your mouth.

Steps to cleaning your dentures:

Plaque can form on dentures, just like natural teeth. If it is not removed every day, your dentures may look less white and bright. It is important to clean dentures daily to avoid denture odor.

- Clean your dentures over a sink filled with water to avoid breakage if they drop.
- Rinse dentures thoroughly in warm water to remove any loose food particles.
- Use a denture cleaner such as Fixodent (Some conventional toothpaste, bleach, vinegar, and soaps are not designed for denture cleaning and could, in some cases, cause damage. Scratched dentures will harbor unsightly plaque and bacteria, causing denture odor. Harsh products like bleach may even turn the pink parts of your denture white.
- Moisten a denture brush (not a soft bristle toothbrush) to clean all surfaces of your denture gently. Brushing too hard can damage any plastic or metal parts. Rinse and brush in clean warm water.
- Use a soft-bristle toothbrush and toothpaste to brush your gums, tongue, palate, and natural teeth before reinserting your dentures. This removes plaque from your mouth and stimulates circulation.
- Rinse with a mouthwash for a refreshing feeling.