

BRAZOS DENTAL GROUP: Instructions for patients with dentures

Cleaning

Dentures need to be cleaned every morning and every evening. It is best to clean them over a sink full of water or a towel as this can prevent the denture from breaking if it slips out of your hands. Remove debris by brushing with a denture brush. Paste is not required, but if you choose to use it: do NOT use toothpaste, instead use a denture-paste or baking soda.

Dentures also need to be rinsed after each meal. No matter how well a denture may fit, some food will get underneath the denture as you eat. If it is left there, it can irritate the tissue. So after each meal, remove the denture, rinse out your mouth, and then rinse the denture under running water. Do NOT rinse the denture in very hot or boiling water as this may cause distortion of the denture; instead use warm to cool water.

Dentures should always be in one of two places: your mouth or a denture bath. The denture bath need only be filled with water or you can use a denture-soaking solution (i.e. Polident or Efferdent). Also, on occasion, you may use a vinegar solution (1 tsp vinegar in a cup of water) to help dissolve tartar.

In addition to cleaning your dentures, it is important to continue to care for your gums and tongue. It is not necessary to use toothpaste, but simply brush the gums and tongue with a soft toothbrush each night. Every day it is important to remove the dentures in order to allow the gum tissues time to rest. This can be done overnight or for a 3-4 hour period during the day.

What to Expect with New Dentures

Eating

Dentures are very different from your natural teeth; unlike your teeth, dentures are not anchored in bone, but instead rest on top of mobile tissue. This means that the denture, especially the lower denture, can and will move in your mouth when you eat and when you speak. Eating with your dentures will take some getting used, so to help do the following:

- Start with soft, easy to chew foods such as – fish, cheese, eggs, chopped meat, cooked vegetables, or ice cream
- Take small bites
- Chew on both sides of your mouth at the same time; this helps to stabilize the denture.
- Biting into food is difficult with dentures and will tend to dislodge the upper denture. Therefore, foods like apples and corn on the cob should be sliced before eating.
- Avoid very hot foods and drinks to prevent burns as dentures decrease temperature sensation.

Speaking

It is common for patients to have some difficulty speaking with a new pair of dentures. A common pronunciation problem is with words containing “s” or “f” sounds. It is helpful to practice by reading aloud or speaking in front of a mirror. It may also be helpful to swallow before speaking to “set” the dentures in place.

Soreness

It is normal for dentures to cause sore spots and require adjustments. Typically, we will see you after 1 week to evaluate the gums and adjust the denture as necessary. Sometimes this is the only adjustment required, sometimes multiple adjustments are necessary before the dentures are comfortable.

Saliva

Saliva is very important to wearing dentures: it helps the denture adhere to the underlying tissue, cushions the gums from chewing pressures, and helps swallow food. When you first begin wearing dentures there may be excess saliva in your mouth – this is a natural reaction and will balance out in about a week.

As with anything new, it will take time to adjust to wearing your dentures and requires patience.

When to Visit the Dentist

To help maintain your dentures and your oral health, annual dental visits are important. These visits will allow us to examine your oral tissues and the fit of your denture, which can change with time as the ridges supporting the dentures continue to change shape.

It may be necessary to visit the dentist sooner if any of the following occur:

- Sore spots
- Chips
- Breaks – dentures do break. **Do not try to repair the denture yourself.** Place the broken pieces in a Ziploc bag and bring them to your appointment.