

## The Care and Use of Dentures

It takes time to adjust to new dentures. So give yourself a break and be patient. Someone who has lost their teeth needs to learn how to use new dentures, just as a person who has lost a limb must learn to use the artificial substitute.

### Tenderness and sore spots

Great care has been exercised in making your dentures fit accurately, however as your mouth has hard and soft areas, adjustments are often necessary while the dentures seat themselves. If soreness persists for more than a few days please phone us so we may arrange an appointment for an adjustment. If you feel compelled to leave your denture out of your mouth, it's necessary for the denture to be reinserted at least 12 hours prior to the adjustment appointment, so we can pinpoint the offending area.

### Appearance

Dentures always feel large and cumbersome at first. Your teeth may appear prominent and your lips full, but after several days the muscles will relax and your face will assume a natural appearance.

### Speech

Difficulties with speech may be experienced for the first few days because of the apparent bulk in the mouth; particularly on the palate and because of the effect this has on the tongue. Once the tongue adapts fully there should be no further difficulties. Practicing reading aloud will assist considerably.

### Eating

Do not become discouraged because you cannot eat naturally at first. It is common for the lower denture to move because of the interference of the tongue and the muscular tension of the cheeks and lips. With practice you will learn to control the lower denture. It will not become tighter. Apart from a few exceptions, no lower denture grips in as tightly as the upper denture does; but with practice and experience you will learn to hold it in position so that it does not move.

For the first few weeks at least, cut your food up very small, put only small portions in your mouth, and be prepared to spend much longer than you were used to in eating your meals. Avoid foods such as steak, which requires a lot of chewing, and sticky foods, which tend to pull the lower denture away from the gum. Biting on the front teeth, e.g. an apple or a crust of bread should not be attempted until you have mastered chewing with your new dentures.

### **Cleanliness and hygiene**

Cleanliness is important not only for appearance, but to promote oral hygiene, prevent mouth odour and to prevent staining of the denture.

Whenever possible, your dentures and any remaining natural teeth, should be cleaned immediately after eating. If you are away from home, washing under a strong stream of water from the tap is useful. Cleaning is best achieved by using a nail brush and soft soap. A toothbrush and toothpaste may be used if preferred, but may be more abrasive on the denture and care should be exercised.

NEVER wear your dentures to bed at night! They MUST be removed before going to sleep.

They are best soaked in a solution of plain water overnight. It is fine to use the denture cleansers such as the effervescent tablets if you like. Another option is to place some white vinegar in the water to help reduce staining and calculus build up.

### **Feeling of nausea**

If you experience a feeling of nausea after inserting the upper denture, you should close your mouth and consciously breathe out through the nose; such feeling usually passes off in a few hours or at the most in a day or two. It is important to continue wearing the dentures for as long as possible rather than keep taking them out of the mouth.

### **Breakages**

Dentures can be slippery when wet. When cleaning your dentures, do so over a basin and always make sure there is sufficient water in the bottom to break a fall, should the denture be dropped.

Avoid excessive pressure on the individual teeth when chewing e.g. biting a chop bone, and abnormal habits such as biting cotton or finger nails. If a breakage occurs, make an appointment promptly, so that it may be fixed in a timely and appropriate manner.