

Your Dentures Fitting and Care



Our teeth gradually deteriorate as we become older. Brittleness, cracking and chipping more readily are all signs of ageing teeth. Deep decay can add to the problem.

For some individuals, severe gum disease (periodontitis) may damage gums and even bone tissue in the jaw, which can lead to tooth loss. Additionally, if teeth are severely affected by trauma, wear, decay or gum disease, your dentist may suggest that the best treatment for you is tooth extraction.

Some individuals suffer extensive loss of teeth, even at a relatively young age. When there are more than just one or two teeth missing, your dentist may suggest a denture. This is to maintain a normal bite and speech, and a normal, healthy appearance of the upper and lower jaws.

Dentures are worn by millions of people around the world today. With the advancements in technology, dentures now look much more natural and fit better than before. Dentures can be a positive experience for many, enabling them to improve their oral health, nutrition levels, appearance and confidence.

A denture is a type of prosthesis and is often referred to as such. The process of fitting a denture is called "denture prosthodontics".

TYPES OF DENTURES

Full denture: when all teeth are missing in either the upper or lower jaw, a full denture is made to replace them. If there are no natural teeth remaining anywhere in the jaw, then dentures will be made to replace both upper and lower teeth.

Partial denture: partial dentures are made to fill the space created by just a few missing teeth. Clasps are used to hold a partial denture in position. They secure the denture by clipping on to nearby natural teeth.

Immediate denture: your dentist inserts an immediate denture straight after your teeth have been extracted, at the same appointment. The immediate denture is used so that the patient can avoid a waiting period without the embarrassment of missing teeth.

Overdenture: an overdenture is a denture that is used in any of the following scenarios:

- attached to dental implants
- over the top of natural teeth
- over tooth roots after root canal treatment

To secure the overdenture in place, either remaining teeth or dental implants are used as anchors.

WHAT IS A DENTURE MADE OF?

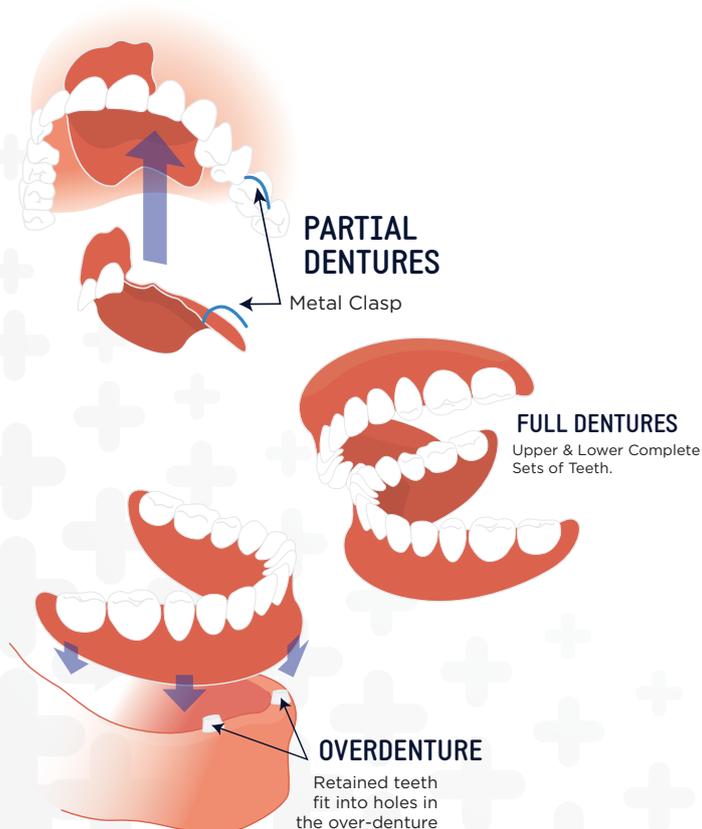
Dentures are made of either metal or acrylic. Your dental prosthetist will discuss the difference in materials, and the most suitable material for you.

ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR DENTAL PROSTHETIST

This brochure does not contain all the facts about dentures and should only be used as a take-home guide after a consultation with your dental professional. It provides general information only and is not a replacement for advice by your dentist or dental prosthetist.

If you do not understand any of the technical terminology used in this brochure, please see your dentist or dental prosthetist for further clarification.

You must follow any additional instruction that your dental prosthetist may have given you. Make sure that you disclose your full medical and dental history to your dental prosthetist, including any medications you are currently or have recently been taking, reactions to any medication (especially antibiotics), and any bleeding disorders. Rest assured, at Dentistry Plus, this information is always confidential.



How Your Dentures Are Made



Dentures are dental prostheses consisting of artificial teeth bonded to a plastic base. The first step in this process is when your dental prosthetist uses a special material to make an impression of the dental arch, along with any remaining teeth. At this time, the shape and colour of your natural teeth will be noted so that your artificial teeth can closely match them.

If you have no natural teeth left, your dental prosthetist will help you with these aesthetic decisions. After this process, the dental laboratory will use these impressions, along with the dental prosthetist's specifications to make your new dentures.

Once your new dentures have been completed and fitted, your dental prosthetist will give you advice regarding how long you should wear your new dentures each day. Becoming accustomed to your new teeth may take a few days or even weeks.

ON THE FIRST FEW DAYS:

- you may feel that your denture is bulky as if taking up too much space in your mouth;
- your denture may feel uncomfortable and tight;
- some individuals report a gagging sensation at the back of the throat;
- your gums may feel irritated or sore;
- you may become aware of an increase in the amount of saliva in your mouth;
- your speech may be affected; however, this will improve in time. Conversely, those with partial dentures may find that their speech almost instantly improves because missing teeth have been replaced, correcting any pronunciation problems.

Give yourself time to adapt to your new teeth and eat only soft foods during these first few days.

ADJUSTING YOUR DENTURES

You will need to have your dentures adjusted after wearing them for some time. Your denture/s may start to feel awkward, loose, or your gums may feel sore. You will need to visit your dental prosthetist to adjust the fit. To make adjustments possible, an

inner lining is placed in the denture. You may need several adjustments before your final fit is satisfactory for long-term use.

Partial dentures and overdentures usually need fewer adjustments than full dentures. Individuals with some remaining teeth usually have less gum shrinkage and fewer changes to the underlying jawbone. Therefore, these dentures may retain a good fit for longer.

Loose dentures can be extremely uncomfortable, causing irritation and even painful ulcers of the gums that may become infected. To prevent this from happening, call Dentures Plus as soon as you notice any looseness so that your dentures can be adjusted.

It is important that you do not try to adjust your denture/s. Your denture has been carefully crafted to fit your mouth. DIY repairs can cause any number of problems.

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR DENTURES

Clean your dentures at least twice a day or preferably after each meal. Remove your dentures, and then rinse away any food debris with cold or warm water.

For those with a partial denture, it is imperative that you thoroughly clean it. Any remaining plaque may increase the risk of losing more of your natural teeth. Your dental prosthetist or dentist will show you how to clean your remaining teeth properly using a toothbrush and dental floss.

When cleaning your dentures, do not use conventional toothpaste as many brands are too abrasive. Instead, brush both the outside and inside surface of your dentures with a soft toothbrush and mild soap (or any other approved denture cleaner). You will find many suitable products at your local pharmacy or supermarket.

WHEN CLEANING YOUR DENTURES DO NOT USE:

- Detergents
- Bleachers
- Methylated spirits
- Boiling water (causing the denture to warp)
- Abrasives
- Other strong chemicals of any kind



Living With Dentures

People of all ages experience the benefits of dentures, whether they are partial, full or overdentures. Today's advanced techniques and materials make them more life-like and more comfortable than ever before. As with most changes, they may take a little getting used to, and some new habits need to be formed.

INSERTING AND REMOVING YOUR DENTURES

You will be taught how to place and remove your dentures by your dental prosthetist. He or she will make sure that you are confident with this procedure before you leave the consultation room. **Remember: never use force to remove your denture.**

GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR NEW DENTURES

Your new dentures may feel uncomfortable at first, even if you have worn dentures before. This is because your mouth needs time to adapt to the new sensation.

EATING WITH DENTURES

It takes a little practice and time to learn to eat with your new dentures. First, you will be experimenting with soft food only, and then after a few days it will be time to experiment with eating a wider range of foods. Approach the task gently. Cut foods into small pieces; take small mouthfuls only, remembering to chew slowly. This will help to keep the dentures in place.

Biting with the front teeth is not a good idea because this can cause the dentures to tip, placing excess pressure on the gums. Instead, bite slowly with your canine teeth (the pointed teeth next to the front teeth).

Be cautious with hot food until you become adjusted to sensing the temperature. Avoid tough or sticky food (e.g. toffee) and sharp or hard food (e.g. nuts or raw carrots).

Once you have become more confident with your new dentures, we recommend you broaden your diet so that you may benefit from improved nutrition. Speak to your dentist about maintaining good nutrition while wearing dentures.

SPEECH

Most people find that after a couple of weeks their dentures do not cause too much trouble with their speech. At first, particular words may be difficult to pronounce. You may need to practice certain words by speaking them aloud in front of the mirror.

If you can hear a clicking sound when you talk, try to speak more slowly. If your dentures slip back when you talk, try biting down gently to reposition it and swallow. In time, your cheek and tongue muscles will adapt and learn how to keep your denture in place. For those with persistent problems with speech, you may require speech therapy. Talk to your dentist about this.

DENTURE ADHESIVE

For added confidence, some people use denture adhesives so that the denture will not slip out of place. Talk to your dentist to find the correct denture adhesive that will work well for you. If your denture does not fit well though, an adhesive will not fix the problem. If you are having problems with the fit, consult your dental prosthetist immediately.

SORENESS

If you become sore underneath your denture, contact your dentist immediately for a checkup. Soreness may indicate that the denture needs to be adjusted. If the condition worsens, remove the denture for at least some of the day. However, before your appointment, make sure you wear your dentures for several hours so the dentist can determine the cause of the problem and adjust your denture accordingly.

Living With Dentures



ORAL HYGIENE

Maintaining good oral hygiene is essential for the denture wearer. This is performed best with a wet cloth, face washer or similar towelling material. Gently rub the gums where the dentures sit, and also rub the top of your tongue. Talk to your dentist if you have any confusion.

PROTECT AGAINST BREAKAGES

Be aware that dentures are delicate and can break easily. Take care when cleaning a denture. Always hold it over a towel or a basin of water when cleaning it so as to cushion the fall if you drop it. Always brush your dentures gently.

If there is any damage or breakage to the clasp of a partial denture, stop wearing it immediately and call your dental prosthetist for an appointment.

Do not try any DIY maintenance by either gluing parts together or attempting to modify the clasp in any way as both may damage the denture.

CARING FOR YOUR DENTURE OVERNIGHT

Discuss overnight denture care with your dentist. There are advantages in removing your dentures while you sleep, as it's important that your mouth and gum tissues have a rest from your dentures. By not wearing dentures while sleeping, you also help prevent any grinding or clenching of the teeth, which can lead to further and unnecessary complications.

REGULAR CHECK-UPS

All denture wearers must maintain regular checkups so that your dentist or dental prosthetist can examine your mouth, to ensure the fit of the denture and check the health of your gums and remaining teeth. Contact your dental prosthetist immediately if you ever have sore gums or if a denture chips or breaks.

Dentures don't last forever, with the average lifespan being around seven years. This lifespan is due to wear and tear, as well as the normal changes that take place to the shape of the mouth. After that time, they will need to be remade.





Immediate Dentures

Your immediate dentures will be fitted at the same appointment as your teeth extractions. Your dental prosthetist will take impressions of your remaining teeth and dental arch before our dentist performs the extractions. Once any teeth have been extracted, your dentist will place the immediate denture in your mouth. This will help to keep swelling or inflammation of the gums to a minimum.

After extraction, the gums will change rapidly as the healing takes place. The gum tissue and jaw will need to heal to form a firm base for the denture.

Over the next few weeks, you may need to visit the dental prosthetist several times for small adjustments. Because it is not possible to test immediate dentures before extraction, adjustments may be required to improve both the fit and appearance of the denture.

It takes approximately three months for the gums and jawbone to heal completely. You may notice that the gums shrink a little, causing the immediate denture to become loose. Your denture may need relining or even have to be remade. During this phase, if desired, it is a good time to make any changes to the appearance of the denture. We recommend you keep the old immediate denture as an emergency spare.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT IMMEDIATE DENTURES

- Avoid hot drinks for at least the first four hours after extraction.
- Your mouth and tongue may feel numb for a few hours after the extraction. Be careful not to bite your cheek, tongue or lips.
- Your dentist will usually advise patients to leave the immediate dentures in place for at least 24 hours. Advice will be given as to when to remove your denture/s and how to clean them. An appointment will be assigned so the dental prosthetist can remove your dentures, address any problems and give you further advice and instructions.
- Sometimes there may be bleeding after an extraction. If so, bite firmly on a cotton wool pad or clean handkerchief for 20 minutes. Usually, this will stop any bleeding.
- Eat soft food for the first few days until told otherwise by your dental prosthetist.
- If your immediate denture becomes loose, put it back in place immediately, providing you do not have to use force to do so. Continue to press it in place with your tongue. However, you should remove the denture if it causes any discomfort. If you cannot replace your denture, then keep it wet in a plastic bag and return to your dental prosthetist as soon as possible.
- Five hours after the extractions, gently rinse your mouth with lukewarm salt water (half a teaspoon of salt in a glass of water) while your denture is in place. Continue this rinsing regularly and gently for the next few days.
- Do not smoke while the gums are healing, as smoking impairs the healing process. Ideally, we recommend you quit smoking due to negative health implications.
- If you suffer any serious pain or other difficulties, call the dental clinic immediately for advice.
- Make sure you attend your review appointment as it is likely that you will need an adjustment of your new denture to improve comfort.

Immediate Dentures



POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS OF DENTURES

For those wearing both lower and upper dentures, allow more time to become accustomed to the lower denture.

- It takes time to get accustomed to even the best fitting denture. Expect to feel a little awkward at first. Some individuals take several months or more before the denture feels comfortable.
- Speech can be an issue for some individuals wearing new dentures with some requiring several months before speech returns to normal. On rare occasions, speech therapy may be required. Occasionally, some minor speech difficulties may persist.
- Sometimes the gums shrink more than anticipated, and a denture may have to be relined or remade. This will incur an additional cost.
- Missing teeth and the subsequent replacement of a new denture may result in a small change in facial shape.
- There may be an increase in the flow of saliva, which is usually temporary.
- Denture prosthodontics, although now being technologically advanced, cannot perfectly replicate your natural teeth.
- As you get used to your new denture, it is not uncommon to feel a little discouraged for a while. It takes a little time to become comfortable with the look and feel of your new prosthesis.
- In time, it is normal for the shapes of the gums and underlying jawbone to change, and the denture to wear out. Therefore, the denture may need to be relined or remade every three to seven years. It is essential to keep up with regular examinations of your mouth and dentures.
- It is imperative to remove and clean your dentures daily. Otherwise, a fungal infection (Candida albicans) may develop in the gums.

- If you suffer from a dry mouth, denture retention may be difficult.
- Badly fitting dentures, if not corrected over time, can cause chronic inflammation of the gum tissue (denture stomatitis).

TREATMENT COSTS

Dentistry Plus will give you an estimate cost of your complete course of treatment. You may be eligible for either a health fund or public health rebate, so check to see if this applies. Your estimate should cover all fees, including fees for your dentures, extractions (if required), fittings and adjustments, and any related costs. If your denture is placed after extractions, there will be quite a rapid change to the tissues that support the dentures. It's important to understand that this will require ongoing care and eventual refitting (relining) of your denture, which will incur an additional cost. Due to the actual procedure possibly differing from the proposed procedure, your final account may vary from your given estimate, particularly when additional procedures are required to adjust your denture, or treat any complication. We recommend you discuss the full costs and potential side-effects with your dental practitioners before the commencement of treatment, rather than afterwards.

CALL YOUR NEAREST DENTURES PLUS CLINIC TO FIND OUT MORE.



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