

## DENTURE POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

When you first receive your new denture(s), there will be an adjustment period. This adjustment period can typically last anywhere between a few weeks and a few months depending on the type of denture you receive, your personal dental history, and several other factors. Even long-term denture wearers will experience adjustment periods with new dentures. Keep in mind, dentures are not permanent as there will be continual changes to your bone and soft tissues in your mouth. Periodically, your denture(s) will require adjustments and relines to ensure proper fit, comfort, and longer service of your denture(s). If you have any questions, please contact our office.

### **Break-In Period:**

Most new dentures require a break-in period before they become comfortable. The length of time for the break-in period varies with each individual depending upon their ability, determination, and perseverance to learn how to use their new prosthesis. The first step is learning to keep them in place, and then gradually learning to use them.

### **What To Expect:**

At first, you may feel awkward with your new dentures. Remember, they are a replacement for teeth, not replacement teeth. Your appearance may undergo a slight change, your speech may seem altered, and some areas of your mouth may feel too full. It is also normal to expect an increase in saliva production while your body gets used to wearing a denture. Time, patience, and some training will soon allow for relaxation of the facial muscles and begin to alleviate some apparent problems.

### **Sore Spots:**

Sore spots from uneven pressure on the gums can occur from time to time. This is not unusual, and should be anticipated, especially for new denture wearers. Sore spots are best identified and corrected if the denture is worn for 3-5 hours prior to returning to the office for an adjustment. This allows us to more precisely identify any problem areas on the denture, and correctly adjust where needed.

### **Speech:**

Learning to talk with your new denture in place requires some patience and perseverance. A great way to begin this process is to read aloud to yourself with your denture in place. This will allow you to learn to enunciate distinctly, especially for words or sounds that may not be clear at first. Try to avoid any movements of the lips or tongue that tend to displace the denture or cause them to click. Remember, this is going to take patience and lots of practice.

### **Eating:**

Start with soft foods that are very easy to chew and swallow, and also begin with smaller bites than you may have been used to. Chew very slowly, and learn to overcome any difficulties that may arise. Keep the food distributed evenly on both sides and chew on your back teeth. Some foods normally require biting with your front teeth. In these circumstances, either cut up the food to chew with the back teeth, or apply pressure towards the back of the mouth while biting with the front teeth. More difficult foods like carrots and steaks will require a more gradual learning. It is recommended that you initially avoid sticky, hard, or chewy foods.

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### **Immediate Denture Looseness:**

An immediate denture is a denture that is fabricated ahead of time, and delivered immediately following the removal of any remaining teeth. It is to be expected that an immediate denture will soon feel loose, mainly due to the gums shrinking as healing takes place. Complete healing of the gums and underlying bone takes several months, and during this time period, a temporary liner may be placed inside the denture to provide a more intimate fit. In addition, once the tissue has closed, denture adhesives may be used to help retain the denture. Once healing is complete, a hard reline may be required, or a new denture may need to be fabricated in order to ensure proper fit, function, and esthetics. There will be an additional charge for any necessary denture relines or replacements.

### **Broken Denture:**

Dentures are made of an acrylic (plastic) material and can break easily when dropped or misused. Never wrap your denture in a tissue or napkin and place in your pocket or purse, as you will likely forget where it was placed, and it will be at risk of breaking. When going outside of the house, keep a denture case with you in order to store your denture safely if you need to remove it for any period of time. It is also best practice to keep your denture in a case at home if you are not wearing it. If a denture breaks, or a tooth is dislodged from the denture, contact our office for an appointment to determine if the denture can be repaired, or if a new denture needs to be fabricated.

### **Mouth and Denture Hygiene:**

It is extremely important to clean your dentures with a soft brush, and a cleaning paste or soapy water after each meal. Avoid using abrasive cleaners as they can scratch the surfaces of the denture, or bleach as it can discolor the denture and is not safe for consumption or absorption by the oral tissues. Food particles that are trapped under the denture can cause inflammation of the soft tissues and sore spots. Remove your dentures and rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash after each meal.

If you had teeth removed immediately before insertion of your new denture, wear your denture continuously for the first 24 hours, removing them only to clean them. Your denture will act as a bandage to promote healing and reduce inflammation.

Always remove your dentures while sleeping, and for a minimum of 6 hours per day in order to allow the soft tissues of your mouth to regain appropriate blood flow, and to maintain cleanliness of your mouth and denture to avoid bacterial and/or fungal infections.

It is good practice to place the dentures in an enzymatic cleaner or denture cleaning solution at least once per week to remove insoluble stains and proteins. Foods will stick to the soft tissues of your mouth, and it is advised to brush the roof of your mouth, your gums, and your tongue twice daily. Massaging and stimulating the soft tissues will reduce the incidence of inflammation and sore spots.



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### **Regular Exams:**

It is imperative that denture wearers have their denture checked and their mouth examined at least once per year as changes in the mouth, such as bone loss, and wearing of the denture teeth will inevitably occur. When the gums and bone that support your denture change, it will cause your denture to become loose or uncomfortable, and your denture may need to be adjusted, relined, or replaced. Denture wearers also have a higher rate of changes in the soft tissue including, but not limited to, fibrous tissue changes, dysplasia, or malignancy. A yearly exam of the soft tissue will help diagnose or prevent major problems before they occur, or at an early stage. Making sure you carefully maintain your denture and supporting soft tissues will help to slow down any of these changes.

If you have any questions, or experience a problem, please contact the office at 843-357-2122.