

Wearing A New Denture - - What To Expect

Complete dentures are less than perfect replacements for natural teeth. However, they have proven to be effective for countless individuals and can be comfortable to wear - - if a person has reasonable expectations and recognizes that there will definitely be an adaptation period.

It is important to understand that "showing off" with a new denture often ends in an unpleasant and embarrassing experience. One must first practice with their new prosthesis and learn what limitations and compensations need to be considered.

The old adage of "***learn to walk before you run***" certainly applies to the successful, secure and comfortable wearing of dentures.



Some factors to consider when wearing a new denture

This is not an exhaustive review of new denture learning considerations. However, these are common areas of concern. If a person has a unique question or problem, they should always contact their Dentist, for advice and direction.

Full feeling:

When new dentures are first placed in the mouth they frequently feel fuller, and it may not seem like there is enough room for the tongue. When a person has been without teeth for a period of time, the inside of the cheeks and tongue can become reversibly slightly fuller. When a new denture is first inserted, this slight fullness may feel enormous. In actual fact it is not, and the full feeling will usually go away very shortly if an individual does not dwell on the sensation. Previously unsupported sunken facial structures and muscles will usually be supported with a new denture to a normal position. These facial tissues adapt rapidly to their regained normal positioning and will feel less strained and subtler shortly. A more youthful appearance results in many cases.

Phonetic difficulty

When a person is used to producing speech sounds without teeth or with an old denture that has no longer preserved proper jaw relationships, they generally have adapted their speech in such a way as to accommodate these abnormal conditions. However, when correct jaw relationships and contours are established again with a new denture, there may be some difficulty producing certain speech sounds clearly, and teeth might even click together in some instances. This is temporary.

If an individual makes an effort to speak slowly and clearly, pronouncing words very precisely, the tongue and other muscles will quickly adapt to produce clear speech. It is often useful to read a book or newspaper out loud, carefully pronouncing each word precisely.

Sore spots and irritations

may develop as a new denture settles-in. This may require some adjustment to the body of the denture, and, more often, careful adjustment of the bite resolves these types of problems.

At times the jaws may feel tired and soreness can develop. Taking dentures out to rest the mouth for a time frequently helps resolve these problems.

Chewing patterns

Need to be developed over several weeks starting by chewing with small pieces of soft food and gradually increasing the firmness over several weeks. Generally food should be chewed on both sides of the mouth at the same time.

Front teeth are considered primarily for esthetics and speech and to a lesser degree for function. Food is not bitten off with the front teeth efficiently, rather the bolus of food should be held by the dentures, near the corners of the mouth, and torn off by rotating the hand holding food in a downward motion. This will increase chewing efficiency and reduce irregular denture rocking.

A denture patient needs to take control and keep a positive attitude for optimal results!

Immediate Dentures - - What To Expect

Immediate dentures are placed in the mouth directly after remaining teeth are extracted. This approach is utilized when a person does not want to be without any teeth for several months while extraction tooth sockets heal and a denture is fabricated.



A two-denture process

Optimally an immediate denture is the first denture of a two-denture process and should be considered as a temporary interim prosthesis until a second refined and esthetically enhanced denture may be constructed after healing. If a patient likes the esthetics of the immediate denture, then the inside of the immediate denture can be relined to increase retention and it can be successfully used as a permanent denture.

First of two dentures stage

Usually most or all of the back teeth are removed and extraction sites allowed to heal a minimum of six-weeks or more, depending upon an individual's healing rate.

After adequate healing an immediate denture is fabricated.

Remaining teeth are extracted and the immediate denture is placed in the mouth. Wearing a denture immediately over extractions is normally no more uncomfortable than the extractions alone. Discomfort is managed with proper anesthesia and pain medication. The immediate denture acts like a Band Aid.

Generally the Dentist does not remove an immediate denture until the day after surgery. Surgery is checked and denture adjustments are made as necessary.

The immediate denture will gradually become loose because of bone shrinkage as the jaw continues to heal. Provisional liners are placed in the loosening denture to help hold it in place better during healing. Adhesives also maintain the denture in place as it becomes looser. If the immediate denture becomes too loose during this healing period of several months, it may be necessary to relin multiple times.

Second of two dentures stage

After adequate healing has occurred, a second refined denture or denture reline is done. A second denture allows the Dentist to now artistically position teeth in an optimal and enhanced esthetic relationship, which was not possible with an immediate denture. It is now also possible to establish better functional relationships of the jaws.

Approximately six months after the second denture is delivered, it will likely need to be relined to compensate for continuing jaw shrinkage. After this reline, a patient usually needs annual relines to accommodate a continually shrinking jaw. The frequency of relines is an individual matter unique to each patient and is best determined by a licensed Dentist after a thorough periodic examination that should occur at six-month intervals.

Modified approaches

It is possible to extract all the back and front teeth at one time and insert an immediate denture. However, such an approach is problematic and is generally discouraged unless the patient has no other alternatives.

All teeth may be extracted with no interim denture while the jaws heal and a denture is fabricated. This is generally a more economical approach, but an individual would be without teeth for several months.

Advantages of an immediate denture

- A person is not without teeth for any extended period of time
- The immediate denture acts as a "bandage" while bony tooth sockets are healing after tooth extractions.

Disadvantages of an immediate denture

- A second refined and esthetically enhanced denture or denture reline is necessary soon after the immediate denture
- While the cost of an immediate denture is generally about the same as a conventional denture, the second denture or denture reline needs to be done soon after the immediate denture. Therefore, a person would be experiencing the additional cost of the second procedure.