

# Denture Home Care Instructions

## *Center for Progressive Dentistry*

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### *Cleaning Your Dentures*

- ❖ Keeping your dentures clean is very important. Just like natural teeth, dentures can build up plaque and tartar that can irritate your gums, stain the denture teeth, and harbor bacteria and fungus.
- ❖ Give your gums a break! Never sleep with your dentures in place, unless directed to do so by your dentist. Place them in a bath of water every night. Denture-soaking solution, i.e. Efferdent, may be used one or more times per week.
- ❖ **Brush** your denture with a denture toothbrush and water. Brushing should be performed at least once a day to avoid build up of plaque. Rinsing your mouth and the denture with water after eating can also greatly reduce the amount of plaque build-up.
- ❖ If you have a partial denture, an over-denture with natural tooth attachments, or a denture supported by dental implants, may sure to brush inside your mouth at least 2x per day (and floss once a day if natural teeth remain). The teeth involved with tooth-supported partial dentures and over-dentures are still susceptible to decay if not taken care of properly. Although dental implants cannot decay, periodontal disease may still develop without proper home care.

### *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.

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### *Soreness and Adjustments:*

- ❖ 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; other times multiple adjustments are necessary before the dentures are comfortable.
- ❖ Be sure to have your dentures checked at least once annually, as changes in the mouth, such as shrinkage and bone loss, will occur. Careful maintenance and routine checkups will help slow down these changes. If you have a partial denture and some natural teeth remain, an exam and cleaning should be scheduled every 3-6 months.
- ❖ Looseness. If you have had teeth extracted immediately prior to placement of the denture, it may feel loose due to gum shrinkage from the normal healing process. A procedure called a “reline” WILL be needed after healing is complete. Sometimes a new set of dentures will have to be made.
- ❖ Please do not try to adjust any part of the denture by yourself, as it may cause irreversible damage to the prosthesis.

### *Adhesives:*

Most well fitting dentures will not need adhesive. In certain cases, adhesive may be necessary to help retain the denture while in function. Be sure to ask your dentist whether adhesive will be necessary for you.

### *Expectations:*

It is important to have realistic expectations for your new dentures. A set of complete dentures generates approximately 20-25% of the chewing force of natural teeth. This can be improved with the use of dental implants to anchor the denture in place. If you are new to wearing dentures, there will be an adjustment period. Eventually, your muscles will adapt to eating and speaking with dentures, so be patient.

If you have any questions about your new dentures or need an adjustment, please call the office to set up an appointment.