

Dentures

A denture is a removable replacement for missing teeth and adjacent tissues. It is made of acrylic resin, sometimes in combination with various metals. Complete dentures replace all the teeth, conventional dentures are placed in the mouth about a month after all the teeth are removed to allow for proper healing, meaning fewer adjustments are needed.



Immediate dentures are placed in the mouth as soon as the teeth are removed, but may require more adjustments after the healing has taken place. To make this possible, we take measurements and make models of the patient's jaws during a preliminary visit.

An advantage of immediate dentures is that the wearer does not have to be without teeth during the healing period. However, bones and gums can shrink over time, especially during the period of healing in the first six months after the removal of teeth. When gums shrink, immediate dentures may require rebasing or relining to fit properly.

A conventional denture can then be made once the tissues have healed. Healing may take at least 6-8 weeks. A partial denture fills in the spaces created by missing teeth and prevents other teeth from changing position; it is suitable for those who have some natural teeth remaining.

Sometimes we will make implant retained dentures, which, once integration of the implants has taken place, will then clip onto the fixtures.

Who needs a denture?

Patients for complete dentures will have lost most or all of their teeth. Dentures improve chewing ability and speech, and provide support for facial muscles, greatly enhancing the facial appearance and smile.

What happens when you get a denture?

We can make a full conventional denture when all teeth have been lost or all extraction sites have healed. The denture process takes about eight weeks and five appointments. An initial diagnosis is made; an impression and wax bite are created to evaluate the position of your jaw; a "try-in" is placed to check colour, shape and fit; then we make a final fitting where the denture is placed, following any minor adjustments.

What is it like to have a denture?

New denture wearers need time to get accustomed to their new 'teeth', because even the best fitting dentures will feel awkward at first. While most patients can begin to speak normally within a few hours, many patients report discomfort with eating for several days to a few weeks. We recommend soft, easy-to-chew foods for you to become accustomed to chewing.

It is perfectly normal to notice a slight change in facial appearance, increased salivary flow, minor speech difficulty, soreness or minor irritation. As your mouth becomes accustomed to the dentures, these problems should diminish. One or more follow-up appointments with the dentist are generally needed after a denture is inserted. If any problem persists, particularly irritation or soreness you should let us know so we can adjust the teeth to make them more comfortable for you to wear.



How do I look after my denture?

A denture is fragile, so it is important to handle it with care. We recommend that for best results you:

- Remove and brush the denture daily, preferably with a brush designed specifically for cleaning dentures, using either a denture cleanser or toothpastes.
- Never use harsh, abrasive cleansers, including abrasive toothpastes, because they may scratch the surface of the denture.
- Don't sterilise your denture with boiling water because it will cause it to become warped. If you wear a partial denture make sure that you remove it before brushing your natural teeth so that you can access all the natural teeth surfaces.
- When not in use, soak it in a cleanser solution or in water.
- Get in the habit of keeping the denture in the same safe place to reduce the likelihood of misplacement.

Can I wear my denture at night?

You may be advised to wear your denture most of the time during the first two weeks, even during sleep, after this initial time period and under normal circumstances it is considered best to remove it at night. Research has shown that removing the denture for at least eight hours allows the gum tissue to rest and allows normal stimulation and cleansing by the tongue and saliva. This promotes better long-term health of the gums.

Are there any alternatives to dentures?

Dentures do not have to be the only way to restore a patient who has lost most or all of their teeth. Implants can now be used to underline permanently cemented bridges, eliminating the need for a denture. The cost tends to be greater, but implants and bridges more closely resemble the 'feel' of real teeth.

What is an overdenture?

An overdenture is a removable denture that fits over a small number of remaining natural teeth or implants. The natural teeth must be in a condition to provide stability and support for the denture.

Will dentures make me look different?

Dentures can be made to resemble your natural teeth, so they only change your appearance for the better. Dentures will improve the look of your smile and may even help 'fill out' the appearance of your face and profile.



Will I be able to eat with my dentures?

Eating will take a little practice. Start with soft foods cut into small pieces. Chew slowly using both sides of your mouth at the same time to prevent the dentures from tipping. As you become accustomed to chewing, add other foods until you return to your normal diet. Continue to chew food using both sides of the mouth at the same time. Be cautious with hot or hard foods and sharp-edged bones or shells.

Will dentures change how I speak?

Pronouncing certain words may require practice. Reading out loud and repeating troublesome words will help. If your dentures 'click' while you're talking, speak more slowly. You may find that your dentures occasionally slip when you laugh, cough or smile. Reposition the dentures by gently biting down and swallowing. If this becomes a persistent problem please let us know.

Should I use a denture adhesive?

Denture adhesive can provide additional retention for well-fitting dentures. Denture adhesives are not the solution for old, ill-fitting dentures. A poorly fitting denture may contribute to the development of sores. These dentures may need to be realigned or replaced. If your dentures begin to feel loose, or cause pronounced discomfort, let us know immediately.

How do you wear a removable partial denture?

Removable partial dentures usually consist of replacement teeth attached to pink or gum-coloured plastic bases, which are connected by metal framework. Removable partial dentures attach to your natural teeth with metal clasps or devices called precision attachments. Precision attachments are generally more aesthetic than metal clasps and they are nearly invisible, as well as more expensive. Crowns on your natural teeth may improve the fit of a removable partial denture, and they are usually required with attachments.