

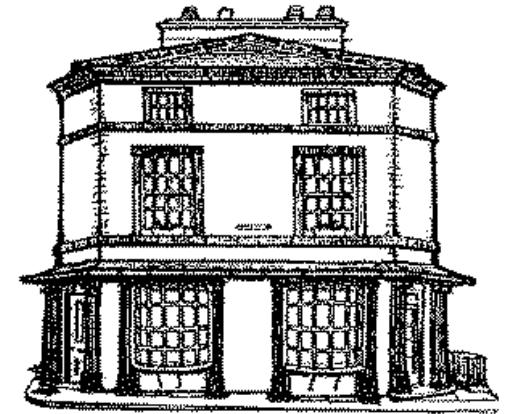
## Aftercare

Over a period of time dentures will need to be relined or remade due to normal wear or changes in the shape of your mouth. Bone and gum ridges can recede or shrink making the dentures loose, which can cause sores and discomfort, and can make eating and speaking more difficult.

Full dentures are usually expected to last 5 years. Partial dentures typically last 3 to 5 years. Immediate dentures may only last 6 to 12 months.

Regular checkups and having any remaining teeth professionally cleaned are vital for maintaining a healthy mouth, and we normally recommend this is done every 6 months. Full denture wearers should have their mouth and dentures checked annually.

# DENTURE ADVICE



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## What is a denture

A denture is a removable appliance that replaces lost or missing teeth, enabling you to enjoy a healthy diet and smile with confidence.

A *full* or *complete* denture replaces all of the teeth in the upper or lower jaw. A *partial* denture fills in the gaps created by lost or missing teeth, and may be attached to the remaining natural teeth with metal clasps or precision attachments.

*Immediate* dentures are inserted immediately after one or more teeth have been removed. The advantage of immediate dentures is that you do not have to leave gaps while healing takes place. However, bone and gums often shrink over time, especially during the first six months after teeth have been removed. When shrinkage occurs immediate dentures may need relining or completely replacing.

## What are dentures made of

The base of a denture is made from plastic (acrylic) or metal (cobalt-chrome or stainless steel) and is either a *plate* design, or made of small bars (a *skeleton* design). The teeth are normally made of acrylic and can be made to closely resemble your natural teeth so that little change in appearance is noticeable. This is especially important for partial dentures. With full dentures you have the option of changing the colour, size or position of your teeth to improve the look of your smile and help fill out the appearance of your face.

## Adapting to new dentures

When you have new dentures you may notice some differences in your mouth. You may experience some of the following:

- you feel you have less room for your tongue
- eating some types of food may be difficult
- food tastes different
- you feel less confident to speak or laugh
- you produce more saliva than before

These are completely normal reactions, and will disappear in time!

- Your dentures may seem big. This is because the new dentures are a shape you are not used to. This will improve as you get used to your dentures.
- New dentures may feel awkward or uncomfortable for a few weeks until you become accustomed to them. The dentures may feel loose while the muscles of your cheek and tongue learn to keep them in place. It is not unusual to experience irritation or soreness during this period.
- Try to avoid foods with pips or seeds as these can get trapped under the dentures. Take care with very hot and cold foods. Your sense of taste may feel impaired, but you will quickly adapt.
- Avoid biting hard with the front teeth, or biting off too much food in one go. Try to chew slowly and evenly with both sides of the mouth to ensure there is even pressure on both sides. Try soft, non-sticky foods to start with.
- Practice speaking by reading aloud in front of a mirror to give you confidence. Much of the sound of our own voice is carried to our ears by vibrations in the jaw and skull bones and

wearing a denture changes the way these vibrations are carried, so you may sound different to yourself.

- If you find that your dentures occasionally slip when you laugh, cough or smile, reposition the dentures by gently biting down and swallowing.
- Wear your dentures all the time for the first few days, including while you are asleep. This will help you to adapt. After the first few days you should leave your dentures out at night. This allows your gums to rest and helps promote oral health.
- When you are not wearing your dentures they should be stored in a container of clean water or a denture soaking solution so they do not dry out.
- Have patience! New dentures take time to get used to, but gradually you will adapt to them. The important thing is to persevere.

## Denture Hygiene

Dentures are very delicate and may break if dropped. When cleaning dentures, do so over a folded towel, or a bowl of water.

Like natural teeth dentures need to be brushed regularly to remove food debris and plaque. Brushing helps prevent dentures becoming stained and helps your mouth stay healthy. There are special denture cleaning brushes available, but a *soft bristle* toothbrush can also be used with a non-abrasive toothpaste.

The use of an effervescent denture cleaner will help remove stains and leave your denture feeling fresher.