

## **POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR DENTURES**

Congratulations on your new dentures! This information sheet will assist you with your adjustment to new dentures. The adjustment period can last anywhere between a few weeks to few months depending on: the type of denture you receive, your dental history, and other factors. Even long-term denture wearers will undergo adjustment periods with a new set of dentures. Please remember that dentures are not permanent, as changes continue to occur in the bone and soft tissues of your mouth. Periodically, your dentures will require adjustments and relines to ensure a long service life and comfort. If you have any questions about your new dentures please call our office.

**BREAKING IN PERIOD:** Most new dentures require a breaking in period before they become comfortable. This length of time varies with each individual patient depending upon their ability, determination, and perseverance to learn how to use them. First, you must learn to keep them in place, and then gradually begin to use them.

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** At first, it's normal to feel awkward with your new dentures. Your appearance will probably undergo a slight change, your speech may seem altered, and some areas of your mouth may feel too full. You may also experience excess saliva initially until your mouth is used to wearing dentures. Time, patience, and some training will soon bring about a relaxation of the facial muscles and begin to alleviate some of the apparent problems.

**SORE SPOTS:** Soreness from uneven pressure on the gums may develop at any time. This is not unusual and should be expected, especially if you have not worn a denture before. Sore spots are best corrected if the dentures are worn for at least 3-6 hours before returning to the office for an adjustment appointment. This will allow a more precise detection of the offending areas inside the denture, which are corrected by trimming.

**SPEAKING:** Learning to talk with your new dentures in place requires some patience and perseverance. Reading aloud is a very good way to learn to enunciate distinctly, especially those sounds or words that are not clear. Try to avoid any movements of the lips and tongue that tend to displace the dentures or cause them to click. Careful practice and repetition may help to hasten the process and produce a return to your normal, confident speech.

**EATING:** Start with soft foods. Take small bites, chew slowly and try to overcome the difficulties as they arise. Keep the food distributed evenly on both sides and chew on the back teeth. To bite foods that normally require the front teeth, such as apples or corn on the cob, apply pressure backwards against the front when closing. If the denture begins to dislodge, biting with the side teeth may be an easier alternative. More difficult foods such as steak and carrots will require a gradual learning curve. Initially, it is recommended that you avoid eating sticky, hard, or chewy foods.

**LOOSENESS:** If you have had teeth removed immediately prior to placement of the denture, it will soon feel loose, mainly due to the gum shrinkage that occurs as the gums heal. Complete healing of the

gums and the underlying bone takes many months. During this period, a temporary liner may be placed inside the denture to keep it relatively snug. In addition, denture adhesives will help to retain a loose denture, once healing is complete, a permanent reline will be needed. In some cases, a new denture may need to be made for the best fit and function. There will be an additional charge for any necessary future denture relines or replacements.

**MOUTH AND DENTURE HYGIENE:** It is extremely important to clean your dentures with a soft brush, a cleaning paste, or soapy water after each meal. Avoid using abrasive cleaners or bleach. Food particles that are trapped under the denture can cause inflammation of the gums and sore spots. Remove your dentures and rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash after each meal, if possible.

If you had teeth removed immediately before insertion of your new denture, wear your denture day and night for the first 48 hours, removing only to clean them. Your denture will act as a bandage and promote healing.

You should remove your dentures for at least 6 hours daily, usually when going to bed at night, to give your gum tissues a rest. During this time, the dentures can be cleansed and placed in a small tub of water to prevent them from drying out which can cause the denture to distort and not fit well.

At least once a week, place them in an enzymatic or special denture cleaning solution to remove those otherwise insoluble stains and proteins. Because foods will stick to the soft tissues of your mouth, it is also beneficial to brush the roof of your mouth and your tongue daily. Massaging and stimulating these tissues will reduce the incidence of inflammation and sore spots.

**BREAKAGE:** Dentures are made of acrylic (plastic) material and can break easily when misused or dropped. Never wrap your denture in a tissue or napkin and put it in your pocket or purse. When going outside of the house, keep a denture case or container to stow away your denture safely if you need to remove it for a short period of time. At home, keep your denture in a tub of water to prevent warping.

**REGULAR EXAMS:** Be sure to have your dentures checked at least once annually as changes in the mouth, such as, bone loss, and wearing of the teeth will inevitably occur. When supporting gums and bone change, causing your denture to become loose or uncomfortable, your denture may need to be adjusted, relined or replaced. Making sure careful maintenance of the dentures and the supporting soft tissues, will help to slow down these changes.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR EXPERIENCE A PROBLEM, PLEASE CALL US (269)488-5400.