

What are immediate dentures?

Immediate dentures are dentures that are placed in your mouth right after your teeth are extracted. The shape of your mouth changes quickly for about a month. As the healing process continues, your gums, which support the denture, will shrink. Changes can continue for several months. During this time, it is important that you keep your dentist office appointments for adjustments. Following are tips to help you adjust to, and take care of your immediate denture.

What to do right after surgery

Day 1 Keep your head up. Take your medication and rest. Put gentle biting pressure on your denture during the first four hours. Use cold packs to reduce swelling.

Eat soft healthy foods such as smashed potatoes, soups, eggs or cottage cheese. Drink cool liquids. Be careful with hot foods. The plastic part of the denture may not allow you to feel hot food in some areas of your mouth.

Don't remove your denture during the first 24 hours. There may be some oozing of blood. The denture acts as a bandage to protect the extraction sites and helps to control bleeding and swelling.

Day 2 The dentist removes your denture and makes any needed adjustments. The dentist shows you how to remove and clean it.

Day 3-4 (Or until your stitches are removed.) Remove your denture three to four times a day and gently rinse your mouth with warm saltwater (1/2 teaspoon salt in 8 ounces of warm water). Lightly brush your denture at the same time, and then place in your mouth.

Care of your dentures

Dentures, like natural teeth, must be cleaned to keep your mouth healthy and odor free.

- Brush the surfaces of your denture inside and out morning and night. Brush with the solution from denture cleanser soaking solutions, liquid soaps or special toothpaste designed for dentures.
- After the first night, store your dentures in water or denture cleanser soaking solution when you are not wearing them. This helps keep the shape and prevents drying out.
- Don't adjust or repair a denture yourself. You can permanently damage the denture and cause harm to the tissue in your mouth.
- Don't use hot water on your denture. It will warp.
- Don't use scouring powders on your denture, as they can remove the denture materials or roughen the surface.
- Don't use abrasive cleaners or bleach to remove stains. They can change the color of gum-colored acrylic.

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Your guide to immediate dentures



Getting used to your denture

A new denture is uncomfortable for the first several weeks. It may feel loose while the muscles of your cheeks and tongue learn to hold it in place. Saliva may increase. You may feel minor irritation or soreness. You may bite your cheeks or tongue as you learn to use your new denture.

It takes practice and patience to eat with dentures. Start with soft foods cut into small portions. Chew slowly and use both sides of your mouth at the same time to keep the denture from moving out of place. Don't bite with your front teeth. That causes your denture to tip and come loose. As you adjust to the denture, add other types of foods until you're back to your normal diet.

Speaking with a new denture takes time and practice. Read aloud and repeat difficult words in front of the mirror. Speak slowly to help reduce muffled, blurred or thickened speech. You may lisp or whistle your "s" when you first try to talk. Your denture may sometimes slip out of place when you laugh, cough or smile. Put it back in place by gently biting down and swallowing.

Although your denture is custom made to fit your mouth, your dentist may suggest using a denture adhesive while you get used to wearing it. Keep in mind that a denture adhesive is only a temporary fix.

Denture facts

- A lower denture is never as "tight" as an upper denture. The lower denture doesn't have the "suction" to keep it in place like the upper one does. The lower denture is held in place by the muscles of the lips, tongue and cheeks. It should not "pop" out of place, but it does not have a tight feeling. It usually takes four to five times longer to master a complete lower denture compared to an upper denture.
- Getting used to a denture takes time and patience. Remember, your gum tissue changes, not your denture. For some patients, many visits to the dentist for adjustments are needed. A big gain or loss in body weight can change the fit of your denture.

What is a reline and when will a denture need one?

A loose denture makes it harder to chew and may cause irritation, sores or infection in your mouth. If your denture is loose, have your dentist check it. You may need a temporary reline or a laboratory reline.

A temporary reline is done in the office while you wait. It is usually done during the healing phase. The dentist adds a soft material that bonds to the underside of the denture. This material helps keep the denture close and comfortable. It is removed when a laboratory reline is needed.

A laboratory reline depends on how many teeth were removed, your health and many other factors. Most people are ready for a permanent laboratory reline in six to eight months, when the healing has completed. You need to leave your dentures with the dentist for up to eight hours. The dentist removes any temporary relines and makes an impression of the space between your gums and the denture. A permanent reline is then made with the same type of material used to make the pink portion of your denture.

A reline generally does not change how the denture or your face looks. A reline does not make a lower denture fit "tighter," but it fits the tissue closer and better.

Important note:

Yearly dental checkup

After you adjust to wearing a denture, see your dentist yearly for a complete checkup.

