

ESSENTIALS FOR DENTURE WEARERS



The first few days – You’re in good company. More than 5 million Canadian adults (about one in four) wear dentures! With a positive attitude and approach to denture care, wearing dentures can become as natural and easy as putting on and taking off shoes.

While you are sure to become comfortable with your dentures, *wearing them for the first time may seem challenging*. It might take some time just to get used to the feel of the denture in your mouth. You may experience some irritation or even soreness at first. But as your mouth becomes accustomed to the dentures, these problems should gradually lessen.

Over the first few days, you may want to wear them most of the time, including sleeping. After this initial adjustment period, you will probably be told to remove the dentures before going to bed. This will let your gum tissues rest and allow you to clean your dentures at night with a tablet solution.

Soon you should find that after wearing them consistently, they will begin to feel more comfortable. With the right attitude and some practice, wearing and caring for dentures will become second nature. Always follow your dental professional’s instructions. Should you experience any ongoing discomfort, be sure to make an appointment to discuss your concerns.

Regular check-ups – You’ve probably seen your dental professional several times to get just the right fit. *Now it’s up to you* to continue to take care of your dentures. Regular dental check-ups are important for your general oral health, and to monitor any changes with the fit, or feel, of your dentures.

Fit and feel – Your dentures may feel odd at first. You may even gag slightly once they are in. They may feel slightly uncomfortable or even loose until your cheek muscles and tongue learn to keep them in place. Take heart! *Within a few days they will begin to feel normal*. With a little practice, you will be able to adjust to this initial feeling and soon you will barely notice them.

Once you’ve been fitted with your new dentures, you may notice excess saliva (the fluid in your mouth). Don’t worry. *This is a normal response*. For the first few days wearing your new dentures, try to swallow more frequently. Within a few days, your mouth will become comfortable with the dentures and the flow of saliva should return to normal.

Eating – Becoming comfortable eating may take a little practice. Start off with soft foods. You may notice that you can’t bite down quite as hard with dentures, or chew in quite the same way. *Try taking smaller bites* and chew gently to prevent dentures from becoming loose. Soon practice and patience will get you back to eating your favourite foods again.



Speaking – You may find that it’s *difficult to speak* when you start wearing your new dentures. That’s normal. Many new denture wearers find it difficult pronouncing “s” at first. Practice by reading or repeating a few words. Read aloud from a book or magazine in front of a mirror so that you get used to speaking. Try biting or swallowing before speaking to “set” your dentures in position.

Cleaning dentures – Keeping your dentures clean is an important part of *complete oral hygiene*. It’s important to clean off food particles or tartar build-up on both the acrylic tooth and the plate to prevent bacteria and fungus from growing.

1. At night all dentures, full or partial, should soak in lukewarm water. This takes pressure off your gums and keeps dentures from drying out and warping. A half-and-half solution of white vinegar and water loosens bacterial deposits so they can be brushed off. Soaking your dentures with Polident tablets, every night or during the day as directed, can clean away any food particles from spaces between the teeth that brushing can’t reach.
2. Imagine how your feet would feel if you never took off your shoes! Mouth tissues are extremely sensitive. They can shrink and change under the pressure of dentures. Give them time to rest and breathe by removing dentures overnight. Your oral tissues need daily stimulation. Use a soft toothbrush to massage your gums; the top, underside, and edges of your tongue; the roof and floor of your mouth. If a brush is uncomfortable, try moistened gauze.
3. Keep in touch with your dentist. Your mouth changes constantly – so your dentures will need adjusting to maintain a good, comfortable fit. Your dentures and tissues should be checked every year to prevent or reduce tissue inflammation and to minimize bone or tissue loss. While reviewing the fit, your dentist will also examine your tissues, check for oral cancer, and review your home-care routine.

Cleaning tips:

1. Fill the sink halfway with water so your dentures won’t break if you drop them.
2. Scrub dentures thoroughly. Ask your pharmacist for a special denture brush; its short bristles clean sides and chewing surfaces, and long bristles reach the narrow spaces inside. Soap and water work fine; baking soda removes stains.
3. If you have partial dentures, clean their metal clasps carefully. Ask your pharmacist for a stiff, conical “clasp brush.”
4. Rinse and brush dentures and natural teeth after every meal.
5. Rinse dentures in clear water before replacing them.

Ensuring the best fit – It's a common misconception that adhesives are only for ill-fitting dentures. No matter how well your dentures fit at first, there may be times when a denture adhesive can help ensure denture stability. When used sparingly as directed, Poli-Grip can provide extra comfort and confidence. This can be particularly true during the first stages of wearing your dentures while you are relearning your eating and speaking skills.

Any physical challenges with the supporting bone in your mouth, use of certain medications or weight loss can all affect the fit of your dentures. You may simply want a more confident feel an adhesive like Poli-Grip can offer. (Of course, if you find yourself using more adhesive than before, see your dental professional so that they can check the fit of your dentures.)

Remember, follow your denture professional's advice and you will be smiling, eating, drinking and talking with comfort and confidence.

Acknowledgements:

Keep Smiling: Information for people with full or partial dentures, GlaxoSmithKline 2002, Denturist Association of Canada