

## From the desk of Namita T. Chaudhary, D.D.S

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR DENTURE PATIENTS

*CONGRATULATIONS, you just received your new denture(s). We hope to work with you through the next couple of weeks with the adjustment of this denture(s) to help get comfortable with this new change.*

Your first impression when new dentures are placed in your mouth will be that they are too loose and your mouth is too full. This sensation will soon leave as the dentures settle into place. An excess of saliva may be annoying and you will have some difficulty in swallowing. With routine wearing, these difficulties will gradually disappear. The sense of fullness becomes less noticeable and the salivary flow will return to normal.

The sensation of gagging may also be present. This is normal and will diminish as your palate becomes accustomed to having the denture in place.

As you learn to manage your dentures, the muscles of the cheeks and lips as well as the tongue will assist in keeping the appliance stable. The feeling of looseness will disappear and you will speak, laugh and eat again with only minimal inconvenience.

### KEEP IN MIND:

Learning to wear a denture takes time. Don't compare your progress with new dentures to the experience of other people. What is annoying and uncomfortable to some people may not be to others. The oral structures which support dentures are different in each individual. This is especially evident in the ridge which supports the lower denture. In general, the flatter the ridge, more movement will be present in the denture. This obviously will increase the time necessary to adapt to the appliance. Also, adaptability to new dentures is modified by age and will become more difficult as one's age increases.

A complete lower denture usually takes about four times as long to master than a complete upper. Be patient; don't worry if your tongue feels strange or restricted. It will soon accustom itself to the new position.

Your speech may be blurred or thickened. You may even lisp or whistle your “S”s when your first attempt to talk. This problem can be rapidly overcome by reading out loud for the first few days until your tongue adapts to the appliance.

You will more than likely experience some pain and discomfort. When sore spots do develop, remove the denture and leave it out for several hours if possible. Using warm salt water rinses will help clear them up also until you can get to the dentist for an adjustment. If the sore spots do not improve, call for an appointment to have the dentures adjusted immediately.

Learning to chew satisfactorily with new dentures usually requires a period of at least 6 to 8 weeks. Eating may be additionally impaired because of the excess flow of saliva for the first few days after placement. Initially, eat only soft foods that are cut into small pieces. Chew on both sides of your mouth at the same time to avoid tipping of the dentures. As you progress to other foods, continue to chew slowly and evenly so that you grow accustomed to managing the dentures as well as the food. Take your time while eating. The longer you take for a meal at first, the sooner you will learn to eat efficiently.

It is very important to keep your dentures clean. An unclean denture is never a comfortable one. If at all possible, remove the dentures after eating and rinse them off. Brush them thoroughly with a soft brush when you remove them for the night. Always brush them over a basin partially filled with water. If you drop the denture, the water will cushion the fall and prevent breakage. Placing the denture in a cleansing solution overnight is also a good practice. By keeping your denture absolutely clean, it will fit better and feel much more comfortable.

It is recommended that all dentures be left out of the mouth for 8-hour period each day. Normally this is most convenient during the night while you are sleeping. The reason this is important is that dentures are constantly applying pressure to the gums and supporting bone. If the tissues are given a respite from this pressure, shrinkage will be less and dentures will fit for a longer period.

Dentures cannot be worn indefinitely without adjustment. Just like clothing or eye glasses, they must be altered periodically by your dentist. After natural teeth are extracted, you must expect some shrinkage of the gums as well. This will continue to some extent for the rest of your life. The result is that, after a period of time, dentures that originally fitted well will become loose. Because of these changes, periodic inspection of the soft tissues by a dentist is necessary. When the change is extreme, new dentures may be indicated in order to preserve the normal facial appearance and maintain healthy tissues and optimal function.

If at any time you have any further questions regarding denture care, please feel free to call the office anytime. Our number is (301) 231-9100.

Enjoy!!