



### **What Kind of Oral Care Is Necessary For People Wearing Dentures?**

A healthy smile is a bonus at any age. Too often older people - especially those who wear false teeth (or dentures) - feel they no longer need dental checkups. If you haven't learned the basics of oral health care, it is not too late to start. And even if you have, it's a good time to review.

Tooth decay is not just a children's disease; it can happen as long as natural teeth are in the mouth. Tooth decay is caused by bacteria that normally live in the mouth. The bacteria cling to teeth and form a sticky, colorless film called dental plaque. The bacteria in plaque live on sugars and produce decay-causing acids that dissolve minerals on tooth surfaces. Tooth decay can also develop on the exposed roots of the teeth if you have gum disease or receding gums (where gums pull away from the teeth, exposing the roots).

Just as with children, fluoride is important for adult teeth. Research has shown that adding fluoride to the water supply is the best and least costly way to prevent tooth decay. In addition, using fluoride toothpastes and mouth rinses can add protection. Daily fluoride rinses can be bought at most drug stores without a prescription. If you have a problem with cavities, your dentist or dental hygienist may give you a fluoride treatment during the office visit. The dentist may prescribe a fluoride gel or mouth rinse for you to use at home.

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It is extremely important to practice healthy dental hygiene when wearing dentures. There is an increased risk of developing a more serious medical condition should oral irritation result from improper dental hygiene. These conditions include, but are not limited to, periodontal disease (gum disease), leukoplakia (thickened white, potentially precancerous patches on the mucous membranes, also called smoker's tongue) and fungal (denture stomatitis) infections.

The gums, tongue and palate should be brushed with a soft bristle brush every evening when the dentures are removed, and each day before you insert the dentures to stimulate the gums and remove plaque accumulation. When removing dentures at night, brush the dentures

carefully to remove any loose debris and plaque then soak them in a cleansing solution. Your dentist will be able to recommend one. Some people keep their dentures in an ultrasonic cleaner, but keep in mind that an ultrasonic cleaner doesn't replace brushing. Handle dentures with great care. When cleaning them, place a towel beneath the denture or clean them over a sink filled with water to avoid accidentally dropping or breaking them.

<http://www.yourdentistryguide.com/dentures-care/>

You should see your dentist 24 hours after delivery of your new dentures. It is not unusual to experience some initial discomfort. Minor adjustments to the denture can increase comfort and eliminate problems before they become more serious. Initially, a new denture may feel unusual in the mouth. The cheeks, lips, and tongue are very sensitive areas that require time to adjust to new dentures. It is not uncommon to bite one's cheek or tongue while acclimating to new dentures. However, persistent soreness or irritation should be reported to your dentist.

Over time, your ridges will naturally shrink as the bone recedes and supporting tissues change. This change will be more rapid with some patients than with others and is affected by the condition of your health and the protective care of your ridges. When this resorption progresses to the point where your dentures are too loose, or your facial appearance starts to change for the worse, it's time to have your dentures rebased, relined, or remade.

Caring for your dentures is not difficult, but it does take a little time and effort each day. With regular maintenance and daily attention, your dentures can stay looking and feeling fresh and they will remain in good condition for a long time.

<http://www.denturewearers.com/pages/care.htm>

The most important thing to remember is to clean your dentures gently and do so daily. Just as you eat with clean silverware, of course you should eat with clean dentures! You may use a soft toothbrush, never hard, and always keep brushing to a minimum. It is important not to use boiled water on the dentures as this can damage them; it is best to clean your teeth with cold water.

Brush and rinse your dentures daily. Like natural teeth, dentures must be brushed daily to remove food and plaque. Brushing also helps prevent the development of permanent stains on the dentures. Use a brush with soft bristles specifically designed for cleaning dentures. Avoid using a hard-bristled brush; it can damage dentures. Gently brush all surfaces of the denture and be careful not to damage the plastic or bend attachments. In between brushings, rinse your dentures after every meal.

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Clean with a denture cleanser. Hand soap or mild dishwashing liquid can be used for cleaning dentures. Household cleansers and many toothpastes may be too abrasive for your dentures and should not be used. Also, avoid using bleach, as this may whiten the pink portion of the denture. Ultrasonic cleaners can be used to care for dentures. These cleaners are small bathtub-like devices that contain a cleaning solution. The denture is immersed in the tub and then sound waves create a wave motion that dislodges the undesirable deposits. Use of an ultrasonic cleaner, however, does not replace a thorough daily brushing. Products with the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance are recommended since they have been evaluated for safety and effectiveness.