

Complete Dentures

Information for patients



What are complete dentures?

Complete dentures are used to replace all the teeth in the upper or lower jaw and are removable.

Why should I have a denture?

Complete dentures improve your appearance by replacing all the missing teeth and recreating support for your lips and cheeks which is lost when teeth are removed.

Eating and speaking are improved when wearing a denture.

What are the dentures made of?

Dentures will most commonly be constructed of acrylic (a hard plastic-like material). Rarely a metal base will be used.

How are the dentures made?

There are several stages involved in making a denture. These are:

- Stage 1)** An initial set of impressions which record the size and shape of your mouth.
- Stage 2)** A second set of impressions which record the details of your mouth more accurately.
- Stage 3)** A bite record is taken which records how your top and bottom jaws come together.

- Stage 4)** A trial fit of the dentures is carried out with some parts of the dentures in wax. This enables both you and your dentist to decide if any changes need to be made. A second trial fit is often needed.
- Stage 5)** Fitting of the dentures.
- Stage 6)** Review(s) to adjust and perfect your denture.

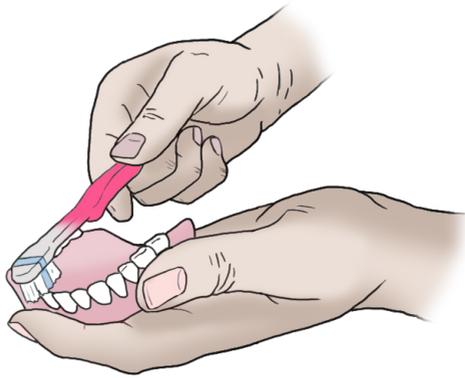


A Dental Impression

There will usually be 2 weeks between each stage (this depends on availability of appointments and the laboratory technician who makes the dentures). Sometimes a stage may need to be repeated in order to ensure the best outcome. It is therefore usually a minimum of 8 weeks before complete dentures are fitted, but it is often longer.

How do I look after my dentures?

Brush your dentures at least twice a day, using soap and a soft toothbrush, over a sink of water in case you drop them. Toothpaste (such as Dentu-Creme©) can be used instead of soap but ensure not to use an abrasive (gritty) toothpaste as these can damage your dentures. Make sure you clean **all** surfaces of your dentures including those which touch your gums.



Your dentures should be soaked at least twice a week using a denture cleaner such as Dentural© to help keep them clean and prevent fungal infections.

At other times when your denture is not being worn it should be stored in water. Always brush your denture prior to soaking to get rid of any debris.

Whichever product you use always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Do not soak the dentures in hot water as this can cause them to change shape and discolour.

Should I wear my dentures at night?

Your dentures should usually be taken out before you sleep, to allow your gums a period of rest. Wearing your dentures at night for long periods can lead to problems such as fungal infections developing beneath the dentures. Taking them out also allows time for you to soak your dentures.

What challenges may I face with my dentures?

You should bear in mind that your new dentures will never be the same as natural teeth. It will take time to adjust to wearing your dentures and it is not unusual to experience some difficulties in the first few weeks.

- When the dentures are first fitted you may notice that you have more saliva in your mouth than usual and the dentures may feel big and bulky. This will generally settle over time
- Speech may be affected initially, but quickly returns to normal
- You, your family and friends may notice a difference in your appearance when wearing the dentures
- Eating may be difficult when you first start wearing the dentures. Try starting with small amounts of non-sticky foods and eating on both sides of the mouth

What if my dentures cause soreness?

Sore spots in the mouth are common when you first start wearing your dentures.

Your dentist will arrange to see you again after fitting your dentures, to adjust any areas which may be uncomfortable and discuss how you are managing.

Where possible, we ask you to keep wearing your dentures as much as you can, in order to help us identify problem areas and make appropriate adjustments.

If you are unable to wear your dentures, take them out (you can wear an existing set of dentures if you have one) but ensure that you put in your new dentures at least 24 hours before your review appointment, to enable you and your dentist to recognise the areas which are sore.

What are the alternatives to complete dentures?

The alternatives for complete dentures are very limited. In certain cases it may be possible to place dental implants which can be used to stabilise a complete denture or to support a fixed bridge. Implants are titanium screws placed into the jaw bone and special fittings are attached to them. Dentures can be clipped onto the implants making them more stable and less prone to moving in the mouth. NHS funding for dental implants is severely limited and they are usually only available on a private basis.

Do I still need to visit the dentist once I am happy with my dentures?

Yes. Visit your dentist as often as they recommend. Regular check ups are important to monitor the health of your mouth and also to maintain your dentures. Poorly fitting dentures can damage your gums. Long term care is not normally provided at the Dental Institute so it is important to find your own dentist once your treatment here is completed.



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