



NOW YOU HAVE A CHOICE. MINT IS OFF THE MENU!

# Dentures and Denture Care

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**A denture is a removable prosthesis or appliance (complete or partial) made to replace natural teeth**

## How do dentures work?

Dentures are naturally retained in the mouth due to a complex combination of the following factors:

### Adhesion

The physical attraction of unlike molecules to each other within the mouth is called adhesion. In the case of dentures the attraction of saliva to the denture base and the tissues covering the denture bearing area provides adhesive forces.

### Cohesion

The physical attraction of like molecules to each other i.e. Saliva.

### Atmospheric Pressure

The creation of a partial vacuum between the denture and the soft tissues.

### Surface Tension

This is created by the attraction of a film of liquid between two compatible surfaces (imagine trying to pull apart two plates joined together by washing up liquid in the bowl).

Using a denture fixative will help the denture stay in place (retention) by providing improved adhesion.

## Do I play a role in how successful my dentures are?

Yes. Learning to eat with artificial teeth requires considerable skill and practice. This is because every person's mouth has a different structure, which can affect the retention and stability of the denture. Also the level of suction which helps hold the denture in place, particularly the upper denture, will vary according to the amount of saliva produced.

Many denture wearers find the lower denture particularly difficult to manage at first. Experience will help, as will the use of a carefully selected denture fixative, which helps to keep the denture in place and stable.

## So, what are denture fixatives?

However well fitting your dentist has made your dentures, they can never provide the biting and chewing efficiency

of your own natural teeth. Using a denture fixative will help to give you confidence and dispel many of your fears about wearing dentures. Even well fitting dentures can benefit and become more stable and secure.

The ingredients work together to hold the denture in place and provide a strong and lasting hold. Therefore a fixative holds your dentures in place more firmly and reduces the wobble, so you can enjoy eating apples, crusty bread and other foods that you may otherwise avoid.

## Gum Irritation

A fixative also acts as a supporting layer between dentures and gums. It helps reduce the effects of any pressure spots, helps prevent the dentures rubbing and makes them more comfortable.

A fixative will make you more confident when meeting people and eating out.

## Why do I need to clean my dentures?

Dirty dentures are unattractive and may smell or taste unpleasant; in addition, deposits on your dentures can be harmful to the health of your gums and any remaining teeth you may have.

Deposits on dentures are the same as those that occur on natural teeth and include: food particles, stains, calculus (tartar) and bacterial deposits (plaque). Certain foods and drinks such as tea, coffee and red wine can cause staining, as can tobacco. A denture which has plaque and tartar present will stain more quickly than a denture which is kept clean.

## How often should I clean my dentures?

It is a good idea to develop a regular routine for cleaning your dentures. If you still have some of your own natural teeth make sure you clean your dentures when you clean your teeth. Whatever type of denture you have, it is best to rinse it after every meal and remove any debris with a soft brush, a denture cleaner and warm water. You should clean your dentures over a basin half

filled with warm water to minimise the risk of damage if you drop them.

## Do I need a special brush to clean my dentures?

Brushing is the most essential aspect of cleaning a denture. Soaking a denture in a cleansing solution alone is not enough.

Use a brush (a large toothbrush is fine) to reach into all the crevices of your denture, especially the fitting surface (the part that contacts your gums) and, in the case of partial dentures, inside any metal parts such as clasps.

Brushing your denture with a specialist denture cleansing paste is probably the most effective way of removing food debris and bacterial deposits (plaque) and preventing the build up of stains or tartar.

## How do I remove deposits of tartar from my dentures?

Such deposits are less likely if your dentures are always kept clean. However, deposits of tartar (a bit like the 'fur' in a kettle) can be a problem for some people. No commercially available denture cleanser is effective in removing such deposits and this needs to be done professionally by your dentist or in a dental laboratory, where your dentures can easily be descaled and repolished.

### *Dentures made of metal and plastic*

- Rinse the denture thoroughly after every meal and remove debris by brushing with a soft brush, soap and warm water
- In the evening, clean your denture thoroughly with a brush and denture cleaning paste
- Do NOT soak your denture in a hypochlorite type of cleanser, an acid or household cleanser
- Remove your denture overnight and leave in cold water. This helps to keep your gums healthy.

### *Temporary soft lining materials*

Sometimes your dentist may 'reline' your denture with a temporary soft lining material and this requires special care:

- Rinse the denture after every meal with cold water
- After about a week or when the soft material shows signs of hardening, a soft brush may be used to assist cleaning

- The denture may be soaked in a hypochlorite type of cleanser for 20 minutes and then rinsed thoroughly with cold water
- Remove the denture overnight and leave in cold water
- Do not use an alkaline peroxide type of cleanser (the ones that make 'fizzy' solutions) as this will cause the material to harden and become rough.

### *Permanent soft lining materials*

If your denture has a permanent rubber lining:

- Rinse the denture after every meal and remove debris by brushing with a soft brush, soap and cold water
- Soak the denture in a hypochlorite type of cleanser for 20 minutes every evening
- Rinse thoroughly and leave in cold water overnight.

## What is the difference between different commercial denture cleansers?

Commercially available denture cleansers generally fall into one of the following categories:

### *Alkaline peroxides*

These are supplied either as a large tablet or as a powder which is dissolved in warm water to produce an effervescent solution in which dentures are soaked for a prescribed period. Examples: Steradent, Boots and supermarket own brands

### *Liquid cleansers*

There are relatively few of these. Current products are usually based either on a dilute solution of hypochlorite (smell of chlorine or bleach) or contain a dilute acid. Neither of these types should be used on metal dentures and the manufacturer's labelling usually includes a note of caution about this. Examples: Dentalur and Denclen

### *Paste cleansers*

Paste cleansers are available in tubes, like toothpaste, but are formulated to be non-abrasive to the plastic of a denture. E.g. Dentu-Creme. Many ordinary toothpastes are too abrasive to be used on plastic although perfectly suitable for natural teeth.

For further dental information go to [www.dental365.com](http://www.dental365.com)

[www.denture.co.uk](http://www.denture.co.uk)

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