

## Taking care of your dentures

- Dentures may feel a bit strange to begin with, but you'll soon get used to wearing them.
- At first, you may need to wear your dentures all the time, including while sleeping.
- Your dentist or clinical dental technician will advise you on whether you should remove your dentures before you go to sleep.
- It isn't always necessary to remove your dentures at night, but doing so can allow your gums to rest as you sleep.
- If you remove your dentures, they should be kept moist – for example, in water or a polythene bag with some dampened cotton wool in it, or in a suitable overnight denture-cleaning solution.
- This will stop the denture material drying out and changing shape.

### Cleaning dentures

- It's important to regularly remove plaque and food deposits from your dentures.
- This is because unclean dentures can also lead to problems, such as bad breath, gum disease, tooth decay and oral thrush.
- Clean your dentures as often as you would normal teeth (at least twice a day: every morning and night).

You should:

- Brush your dentures with toothpaste or soap and water before soaking them to remove food particles
- Soak them in a fizzy solution of denture-cleaning tablets to remove stains and bacteria (follow the manufacturer's instructions)
- Brush them again as you would your normal teeth (but don't scrub them too hard)
- Dentures may break if you drop them, so you should clean them over a bowl or sink filled with water, or something soft like a folded towel.

### Eating with dentures

- When you first start wearing dentures, you should eat soft foods cut into small pieces and chew slowly, using both sides of your mouth.
- Avoid chewing gum and any food that's sticky, hard or has sharp edges.
- You can gradually start to eat other types of food until you're back to your old diet. Never use toothpicks.

## Denture adhesive

- If your dentures fit properly, you shouldn't necessarily need to use denture fixative (adhesive).
- But if your jawbone has shrunk significantly, adhesive may be the only way to help retain your dentures.
- Your dentist will advise you if this is the case.
- At first, some people feel more confident with their dentures if they use adhesive. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and avoid using excessive amounts.
- Adhesive can be removed from the denture by brushing with soap and water.
- Remnants of adhesive left in the mouth may need to be removed with some damp kitchen roll or a clean damp flannel.

## When to see your dentist

You should continue to see your dentist regularly if you have dentures (even if you have complete dentures) so they can check for any problems.

Your dentures should last several years if you take good care of them. But your gums and jawbone will eventually shrink, which means the dentures may not fit as well as they used to and can become loose, or they may become worn.

See your dentist as soon as possible if:

- Your dentures click when you're talking
- Your dentures tend to slip, or you feel they no longer fit properly
- Your dentures feel uncomfortable
- Your dentures are visibly worn
- You have signs of gum disease or tooth decay, such as bleeding gums or bad breath

If poorly fitting or worn dentures aren't replaced, they can cause great discomfort and lead to mouth sores, infections or problems eating and speaking.