Chastain
DENTAL STUDIO

What To Expect as a First Time Denture Wearer

Losing natural teeth can be a difficult adjustment, as there is nothing like your own healthy teeth for eating, speaking and smiling. Complete dentures can be a great option to get you back to functioning properly. The best method for success is to educate and prepare yourself for what to expect when you're wearing dentures for the first time.

Getting used to wearing complete dentures can be a challenge for some, but with patience and determination, you can adjust to them so that you are able to enjoy your favorite foods and smile with pride again. Think of your mouth like other parts of your body. If you lost a leg and had a prosthetic replacement made, you wouldn't start out running or ballroom dancing with the new leg. You would start with baby steps until you got used to functioning with it. Dentures are the same way. Give yourself plenty of time to adjust to your new dentures. Some people need few adjustments and do well right away. For others, it may take multiple adjustment appointments to be functioning comfortably, but your dentist is happy to work with you to get you there.

Here are some pointers explaining what you should expect if you are wearing dentures for the first time.

1. **Get used to the dentures being in your mouth before you try eating with them.**

    a. It can be challenging to learn to eat and speak with new dentures in the beginning. Now you will have acrylic covering your gums and the roof of your mouth. Wearing your dentures first when you are not eating will allow your cheeks and tongue to get used to the way the new dentures feel before you try to start functioning with them.
    b. Try to wear them as much as possible during the day, even if they are somewhat uncomfortable. The more you wear them, the quicker you get used to them. With the acrylic covering the roof of your mouth, food may taste bland and you won't feel temperatures of food and drinks like you used to. The dentures cover the taste buds on your palate, but don't worry, you have plenty of taste buds on your tongue to help you enjoy your food.

2. **Sore spots:**

    a. Every denture wearer will experience “sore spots”, where the denture acrylic rubs against the gum tissue. These areas can be adjusted by your dentist to reduce pressure on the sore areas. For some people, it can take several adjustment appointments to find all of the sore spots so the dentures function comfortably.
    b. Warm salt water rinses can help keep the sore areas clean. Topical anesthetics like Orajel can help numb the sore spots so you can eat more comfortably, but don't use it more than 3 times daily or for extended periods to avoid irritating the tissue more.
    c. If you have a sore spot that needs attention:
        i. Call your dental office for an adjustment appointment.
        ii. Wear the dentures as much as you can, even if it is uncomfortable. This helps your dentist see where the pressure is in your mouth so they can adjust the proper area on the dentures.
        iii. Keep the area clean to help it heal faster.

3. **Difficulty with eating:**
    a. Having trouble with eating is common when wearing new dentures. You will need some time to adjust the way your dentures feel against your gums, tongue, and palate. It will require some practice to chew with the dentures. It is important that your Dentures sit comfortably, not loose. Denture adhesives are available for use if your dentures move around while eating or speaking. Be sure to thoroughly clean the adhesive from your gums and the inside of your denture daily if you need to use it.
    b. When beginning to eat with new dentures, it is a good idea to start with softer foods like mashed potatoes, yogurt, applesauce, etc. to give you a chance to learn to move food around your mouth with your new dentures. You can gradually move to heartier foods when you feel you are ready.
    c. Take your time when eating, cut food into small bites and chew thoroughly to help your digestion. Chewing with food on both sides of your mouth (instead of favoring one side) can help keep the chewing pressure even and stabilize your dentures while you chew. To avoid frustration, practice eating at home before you test out your dentures at a restaurant.

4. **Difficulty in speaking:**
    a. You may find speaking a tough nut to crack when wearing dentures at first. This aspect is one of the major concerns of the denture wearer. However, you can overcome the problem via practicing. It is worth noting that speaking correctly with dentures requires weeks of practice. So, do not expect it to happen overnight. The best way to improve your speaking is by reading a book, singing or talking to yourself out loud. Continue reading like this until you get comfortable with the way the dentures feel when you speak.

5. **Regular cleaning:**
    a. Make sure to clean your dentures daily to remove food particles and bacteria that can cause bad breath and oral infections. You can purchase a toothbrush made specifically for cleaning dentures. Be sure to brush them well inside and out. You can also use denture cleaning tablets to soak them at night.
    b. Clean your gum tissue, tongue and cheeks daily with a gauze pad, clean washcloth or extra soft (sensitive) toothbrush.

6. **Leave your dentures out at night:**
    a. Your oral tissues need a chance to breathe in order to stay healthy. Denture wearers should remove their dentures at night so air can get to the tissue. Those who don't take their dentures out during the day and sleep in them overnight have a higher incidence of irritation and ulceration than those who let their mouths breathe. If you don't like to sleep without them, at least remove your dentures for a few hours each day.

7. **Keep your dentures safe when not wearing them:**
    a. When you aren't wearing your dentures, keep them in a cup or plastic denture container with a little bit of water so they don't dry out. Keep your dentures out of reach of pets when you aren't wearing them. Animals often smell food scents on the acrylic and will chew on the dentures, often destroying them.

8. **Stay hydrated:**
    a. Drink plenty of water and try to keep your oral tissues hydrated. Successful denture wearing depends on saliva for lubrication of the tissues that sit against the denture acrylic. If you experience dry mouth, there are several lubricating products on the market that can help, including oral sprays, rinses, gels and lozenges.

9. **Dental visits:**
    a. After you have gotten used to your new dentures, you may still need to return for adjustments periodically. Remember, your mouth is full of living tissue that is always changing, and the fit of your dentures may also change as time goes by. Dental experts recommend that even if you have no teeth left that you would still need to visit your dentist for a routine oral examination annually. This is necessary to evaluate gums and other soft tissues present in your mouth, check for oral cancer and evaluate fit and function of your dentures.