



# Caring for Your Removable Denture

**This handout explains how to take care of your new denture(s). Care tips for your oral health are included.**

Your doctor has made you a new denture to replace some or all of your teeth. It is a prosthesis, just like an artificial arm or leg. You may have one denture or a set of dentures. In this handout, the word “denture” will be used throughout, but all of the same care instructions apply if you have a full set of dentures.

Your denture will serve you well if you take good care of it. Do not expect it to work as well as your natural teeth. Seldom does a denture function that well.

## **Wearing Your Denture**

Wear your denture as much as you want, but do **not** wear it at night when you are sleeping. Your mouth and gums need time to breathe and relax. Taking it out every night also helps to prevent fungal infections. (It may help to think of your denture like your shoes. It would not be wise to wear your shoes to bed every night, and if you did, your feet might get fungal infections as well.)

## **Adhesives**

Use of an adhesive may greatly enhance the stability and fit of your denture, especially on the lower jaw. Over-the-counter creams or powder adhesives are recommended. Be sure to clean the denture and your gums well each night to remove any residual adhesive.

Do not use adhesive pads. They alter the fit of the denture and may cause your bone to shrink away faster.

## **Cleaning**

Clean your denture after every meal. It is normal for some food to get under it. The sooner you can remove the food, the better.

To clean your denture, follow these steps:

1. Place a washcloth in the sink, or fill up the sink part-way with water. We suggest you do this because if you drop an acrylic denture against porcelain, the denture may crack, break, or chip.

**NEVER use bleach to clean or sanitize your denture. Bleach will ruin your denture.**

2. Use a toothbrush and either toothpaste or dishwashing soap to thoroughly clean both the tissue side and the tooth side. You may use cleaning tablets (such as Polident<sup>®</sup> or Fixodent<sup>®</sup>). Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Note that when using the cleaning tablets, you will still need to scrub your denture with a toothbrush to clean it well.
3. Rinse well.
4. Keep your denture moist at all times to prevent drying, cracking, and distortion. Put your denture in water or place it in a moist towel when it is not in your mouth. It is OK to add a few drops of mouthwash to the water if you wish. Be sure to change the water daily.

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### **Sore Spots**

As you wear your denture, it is expected that sore spots will appear. While we make every effort to fit your denture as well as possible, it is normal to need additional adjustments as it settles in to achieve an optimal and comfortable fit. The adjustments only take a few minutes. If you have soreness you cannot tolerate, remove your denture and come to see us.

### **Adjustments/Relines**

With time, your bone will shrink slightly and the denture will loosen and need adjustment to the bite and fit. Come in on a regular basis to have the fit checked and the denture relined to tighten it up again. You can expect to need a reline every 3 to 5 years. You will need a new denture about every 10 to 12 years. Do **not** adjust your denture yourself.

### **Partial Denture**

A metal-based denture is very rugged, but the metal is inflexible. Do **not** try to adjust any clasps or rest areas on your denture. You may break something off, causing a need for repair that is both difficult and expensive. If your partial denture is loose, come in and let us tighten it. Also, take extra care to clean it well in all of the intricate areas.

An acrylic-based partial, with or without wire clasps, should be cared for just like a complete denture. Do **not** attempt to adjust any wires.

### **Implant-retained Denture**

There are several methods of retaining your denture to an implant system. If you have one of these systems, you can expect a bit more maintenance to keep it fitting properly and tightly. Adjustments are made during an office visit. Be sure to keep the implant parts in your mouth spotlessly clean. Plaque, which builds up if you do not brush after eating or drinking, is their worst enemy.

## Questions?

Call 206-598-4277

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Dental Clinic:  
206-598-4277

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## Handle with Care

Acrylic is a relatively brittle material. It will crack, craze, break, and/or chip with use. When this happens, please come in and let us fix the problem before it creates a chronic sore spot or mouth ulcer. Some repairs can be done in the office while you wait. Others will need to be sent to the lab for a few days. Sometimes your denture will not be able to be repaired and a new one will have to be made.

Keep your denture away from pets, especially large dogs. They love the saliva residue on it and have been known to turn it into a chew toy. Try not to run over your denture with your car, step on it, or throw it at the wall. We have experienced all of these, and the damage is usually more than can be fixed.

Of course, everyone has heard stories about a lost denture and about the one that was accidentally thrown away. Choose a place to store your denture when it is not in use. Be sure to advise others, as needed, about how to handle your denture with care.

## Oral Examinations

Even if you have no teeth, your mouth still needs to be checked at least once a year to ensure there are no other problems such as oral cancer, infections, ulcerations, and/or salivary gland problems. Plan on routine oral exams as your doctor prescribes.

## Fungal Infections

*Candida albicans*, a common oral fungus, often grows with vigor under a denture. If you have white spots, red inflamed tissue, pain, or other “not-normal” symptoms, please call us. We will prescribe medications to make the infection subside and explain how to treat your denture to help ensure that the infection does not easily recur.

## Further Instructions

Please call our front desk at 206-598-4277 to make an appointment for any denture-related issue.

If you have an urgent care issue after hours or on the weekend, call the paging operator at 206-598-6190 and ask to page your doctor.

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