

## Post-Operative Care for Immediate Dentures:

Dentures are teeth substitutes and only have 20-25% of the chewing efficiency of real teeth. They often replace large amounts of lost gum tissues, bone and teeth, often require a period of adjustment.

- **Do not take your denture out today:** Rinse your mouth with warm salt water (1 teaspoon of salt to 1 cup of warm water) before going to bed.
- **Medications:** Ibuprofen (i.e. Advil, Motrin) 400-800 mg every 4-6 hours usually will provide sufficient pain relief. Be sure to take this with food. Additional pain medications will be prescribed if needed. Antibiotics may be prescribed for infection control. All these medications should be taken as directed unless an allergic reaction develops (i.e. rash, itching, unusual swelling). If an allergic reaction develops, stop taking the medication and call us; if the reaction is severe (i.e. difficulty breathing), go to the nearest Emergency Room. NO ALCOHOLIC beverages should be consumed while taking these medications.
- **Bleeding and Swelling:**
  - Slight bleeding can last up to 2-3 days. Biting pressure on the denture will promote clotting and decrease bleeding. Do not "chew" the denture as this can create a pumping action which can increase the bleeding.
  - For the first 36 hours, apply an ice pack to the affected side for 20 minutes on, then 20 minutes off. Do this as many times as possible during the waking hours. Avoid heat to the outside of the affected side.
  - For the first week, limit your diet to soft, nurturing foods. Be sure to drink plenty of water.
  - Sleep with the denture in your mouth for one week unless otherwise instructed. Sleep with your head slightly elevated. After one week, remove the denture while sleeping to allow your gum tissues time to relax.
  - If stitches have been placed, they will need to be removed in 7-10 days. Sometimes resorbable sutures are used – these dissolve in one to two weeks.
- **Cleaning:** Starting tomorrow, carefully remove your denture twice a day and clean with water, mild soap or denture cleaner. With the denture out, rinse your mouth with warm salt water and gently reinsert your denture. Over time dentures acquire stains and odor just like regular teeth. They can be cleaned daily with a denture brush and a mild soap or water. Periodic denture soaks are also very useful (ex: Polident). Brush your gums with a regular toothbrush once per day to toughen and clean them.
  - No denture is indestructible! Often, dentures are broken when dropped while cleaning. So, our first word of advice – as you clean your denture, fill the sink with water or lay a washcloth down on the counter to cushion any accidents.
  - When not wearing your denture, store in a clearly labeled, sealable container in water to increase the life and prevent shrinkage of the appliance. Containers can keep pets from destroying/chewing the appliance and prevent loss or misuse.

- **Sore Spots:** It is not unusual for your mouth to have a few “sore spots” after wearing the denture for 24 hours. These areas can be relieved easily at follow-up appointments. If a severe sore spot develops which prevents wearing the denture and an appointment is made for adjustment, please wear the denture for 24 hours prior to the appointment. This will greatly aid in pinpointing the exact location of the soreness, making adjustments significantly easier and more predictable.
  
- **Adjustment Period:** An immediate denture may provide instant satisfaction but is not the ideal way to go about getting teeth. We are taking impressions of mouth/gums prior to extractions and making your denture on estimates of how we think your gums will heal. Tooth removal changes the structure and shape of the underlying bone where your new denture will sit. Different people adapt at different rates. It may take months to learn to eat or speak naturally with your new prosthesis. The new bite may feel awkward and bulky for several weeks or months. Dentures cover areas of your mouth that are normally bare. The upper denture is held in primarily by suction and the lower denture has very little to no retention, relying on muscle and tongue control to hold it in place. This might alter your speech and chewing ability and require that your tongue and lips adapt accordingly. For the first few days, you should wear your dentures for as long as possible. Removing the dentures for more than several minutes at a time may allow gum tissue around extracted tooth sockets to swell, blocking re-insertion of the dentures. Practice inserting and removing the denture when several days have passed since extractions. See your pre-op consent instructions for more information.
  
- **Home Care and Follow up:**
  - After the initial week of healing, do not wear your dentures to bed. It is important to allow your gum tissues and jaw bones to rest at least 4-8 hours a day in order to prevent further tissue irritation, infection, and future bone shrinkage.
  - With immediate dentures/extractions there is a relatively fast loss of the bone that once held the natural teeth in place. By the end of three weeks, enough bone has been lost that there is a LOT of space between parts of the denture and the healing gums. This leads to rapidly increasing looseness and sore spots which must be adjusted frequently. A temporary liner can be inserted if needed, or denture adhesives may be used. These are simple ways to tighten the denture against the gums and make the denture more comfortable until enough healing has taken place to do a permanent "hard" reline (at additional charge) at the end of 6 months. The “hard” reline is a separate procedure and the cost is NOT included in the original price of the immediate denture. The hard reline marks the official transition of the immediate denture into a standard denture.
  - Annual checkups will allow your dentist to readjust/reline your dentures to restore their fit and inspect the appliance for cracks or damage (once healing is complete; bone and gums are still lost at a rate of 0.08 cm per year). Wearing ill-fitting dentures for too long without refitting can cause severe bone loss and very serious oral disease.

Please feel free to contact us for any additional information or instructions.