

Complete Implant Supported Overdenture

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE AND ONGOING CARE

Your new prosthesis has been custom made to fit the shape of your gums and attachments have been placed to retain your prosthesis securely to the implants. However, the process of making acrylic does introduce some small irregularities and so slight imperfections of fit are likely and hence "rubbing" or "sore spots" are to be expected in the first weeks of use, especially prior to your attachments being fitted, but even after they are.

From day one, you should think of your new prosthesis with the analogy of a new set of fine leather shoes. Your prosthesis will fit you well, but like new shoes, if you walked in them too much, too soon (before they soften up), you will see blisters. The same applies with your new prosthesis. Even if it feels comfortable, do not try to eat a regular diet too soon, or it will cause more rubbing and soreness and possible biting of your cheek and tongue. Instead you should cut your food into small pieces and eat a very soft diet for the first two weeks, to ensure your gums and cheeks become accustomed to the new acrylic fitting surface, and to allow you to learn how to use this new prosthesis. You will chew best with your prosthesis if you can learn to chew your foods on both the left and right sides simultaneously (we appreciate that this is not easy!).

MANAGING SORE SPOTS:

When an area of gum becomes sore, remove your prosthesis and rinse with salty water. Allow the gums to rest for up to two hours before reinserting the prosthesis and wearing it again for a few more hours. Repeat this process whilst the sore spots persist. If the spots are not gradually improving, then you will need an adjustment, so please telephone us to make an appointment. Please do not attempt to do your own adjustment.

ATTACHMENTS:

After a 2 week settling in period, we will connect the attachments and this will make your overdentures more secure. Please note, attachments do not enable you to chew harder or better, but merely secure your denture so that it is not as loose. Attachments start quite tight and gradually become progressively more loose with time. Eventually, they will not be tight enough to be useful, and you should then return to see us to have the nylons replaced. This is a relatively small cost, and replacement is usually indicated each 6-18 months depending on your individual circumstances.

CLEANING AND CARE:

Your implants and their gold-cap attachments must be brushed twice daily with a soft brush and toothpaste, just like natural teeth. They may accumulate tartar with time and hence will require a professional clean periodically.

As the acrylic of the prosthesis is fabricated in a water bath, the finished prosthesis retains some moisture content and hence is susceptible to drying out when not in your mouth. Therefore, it is important that the prosthesis is kept in a humid environment when not being worn. This can be a zip-lock bag or Tupper Ware container with a drop of water in it, or the prosthesis can be fully submerged in a container of water. However you achieve it, please keep the prosthesis moist to ensure it does not dry out, crack or warp.

Your prosthesis must be cleaned each day with a small-head toothbrush and liquid soap. Do not use toothpaste (which forms a scum) or harsh abrasives (Ajax etc.). Once a week, or more regularly, you may like to use a denture soak solution (such as Polydent or Sterident) to assist to clean your prosthesis. You should aim to remove your prosthesis after each meal, and rinse it, and once each day, give it a thorough clean as described above. If you wear your prosthesis overnight

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whilst sleeping, your gums will need a rest too, and saliva must wash over the gums to prevent bacterial or fungal infection. It is therefore important that you brush your implant abutments and gums twice a day, just as if they were real teeth, and this must be done in addition to cleaning your prosthesis. Ideally though, please keep your overdentures out overnight while you sleep.

CARE OF THE ATTACHMENTS:

Always inspect the inner surface of your attachments as well. A soft toothbrush or wood tooth pick can be used to remove any accumulated food. Do not use a metal implement for this. If your attachments seem to become loose suddenly, it may be that some food debris has accumulated in the nylon housing in your denture, and this should be cleaned out as described. If your attachments become progressively too loose, then most likely, your attachments need to be replaced.

FUTURE CARE:

Once teeth are removed, the gums will begin to shrink as the jaw bone below begins to re-shape. Most of the changes occur in the first six months after the extractions. However, over time, gums continue to change and so your dentures will become less well fitting, and eventually will become quite loose. The same gum and bone changes occur in patients with dental implants. To maintain your dentures, you should plan for at least annual reviews to monitor the health of the gums and detect further shrinkage. Early detection will mean that loose dentures can be corrected by relining. A reline of the dentures will improve their fit. This is a separate procedure with its own item code and cost. Late detection of gum shrinkage will usually necessitate new dentures be made instead. Your implants will also need annual reviews and periodic x-rays to monitor bone levels.

If you wear your dentures overnight and do not clean the implants enough, you may see gum changes that result in swelling or recession around the implants. This can even lead to loss of implants. If you see such changes or redness and bleeding around your implants, please contact our practice as soon as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you have any questions about the use and care of your new prosthesis.