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INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR NEW DENTURE

INTRODUCTION:

New techniques and materials have improved our ability to replace missing teeth. However, NO artificial prosthesis, regardless as to how well it is made, will ever function as efficiently as your original teeth. The best-made denture can only function 20% as well as your natural teeth. Dentures are not substitutes for *teeth*, but are substitutes for *no teeth*. A positive attitude, patience, and perseverance are of utmost importance when learning to use your new dentures. Coordination of your cheeks, lips, and tongue that is necessary to function with dentures must be learned. Like riding a bike or learning to ski, it takes practice! Millions of others have learned the skills, and you can too!

THE FIRST FEW DAYS:

This is the most difficult time. With healing, practice, and adjustment visits, things will get better!

- Eat soft foods
- Denture sores are common and may develop as soon as the next day. Think of it like wearing a new pair of shoes; in the store they feel comfortable, but after walking around you realize where they are pinching. Sore spots are easily adjusted by your dentist. NEVER attempt to adjust or repair a denture yourself. If the sore area is too painful, leave the denture out until we can see you.
- Use warm salt-water rinses to cleanse the sore areas
- You may experience: increased salivation, a gagging sensation, and feelings that the denture is too bulky.
- Speaking is another hurdle that will be overcome with practice. Try reading out loud to yourself each day.

CHEWING:

A denture is, in effect, one big tooth that gently rests on soft moveable gums. Chewing forces must be balanced as much as possible. It is important that your bite feels even on both sides. If not, the dentures need adjustment. The best way to chew is with small bites and an up and down motion instead of grinding. Avoid hard and chewy foods like whole apples, corn-on-the-cob, tough meats, caramels, etc. When in social settings, select foods that can be cut into small bites, place the food on both sides on the back teeth, and chew slowly.

Proper nutrition and fluids are important both to your overall health and to your success in wearing dentures. Try to wear the dentures at mealtimes despite the difficulties. Practice will ensure success.

MOUTH AND DENTURE CARE:

The dentures should remain out of the mouth for at least 8 hours per day. Rest is essential for the long-term health of the gums.

Dentures tend to collect more food debris than natural teeth. They must be removed and cleansed after eating. You can use a regular toothbrush with mild soap/water. Do *not* use toothpaste since this can damage the denture. Whenever the dentures are out of the mouth, they should be stored in clean water or denture cleanser. Keep the denture out of reach of pets. Dentures make very expensive chew toys.

DENTURE ADHESIVES:

Many patients find that using denture adhesive increases their confidence, even if the dentures fit well. It may be necessary to re-apply adhesive throughout the day. Adhesive is not a substitute for a poorly fitting denture. Placing excessive amounts of adhesive under poorly fitting denture will only damage your gums further. The best way to remove the adhesive from the denture and the mouth is with an inexpensive electric toothbrush and cool water.

THE FUTURE:

After teeth are lost or removed, the bone that supports the teeth begins to shrink. This shrinkage causes dentures to loosen over time. Dental implants can help delay bone shrinkage and the sensation of a "floating denture". We would gladly discuss the implant options with you as you see fit.

Adjustments can make a big difference if you are experiencing sore spots, your bite feels uneven, or if you feel like you have excessive cheek or tongue biting.

On average, dentures need to be relined or replaced every 3-5 years. We need to see you for a yearly examination to re-evaluate your dental health.

ADAPTING TO NEW DENTURES REQUIRES TIME, PATIENCE AND PRACTICE.

Welcome to a new world, not the end-of-the world.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!