

Caring for Dentures

tips for

Seniors and Caregivers



Oral hygiene is important to remove harmful bacteria and plaque from the teeth, gums and dentures and to keep the mouth healthy. For seniors and their caregivers, it can be challenging to maintain daily mouth care, but it is important to do as decay and infection can develop quickly. A healthy mouth supports good general health and overall well-being.

Dental disease is largely preventable with daily mouth care, regular professional cleanings and a yearly examination by a dentist, including for seniors who wear dentures.

Supplies for denture care:

- A toothbrush or denture brush as appropriate
- Liquid hand soap or denture toothpaste
- A denture cup to store dentures overnight

Supplies for caregivers:

- Disposable gloves
- A towel or washcloth
- A basin and a cup of water
- A mouth prop, as appropriate

For seniors with natural teeth and a denture, please also refer to the tip sheet *Caring for Natural Teeth*.



Store dentures dry overnight in a denture cup



Remove dentures and clean with a denture brush or soft toothbrush using liquid hand soap or a denture toothpaste



Dental supplies



Seniors:

- Clean dentures twice a day.
- Dentures must be removed from the mouth before cleaning.
- Clean dentures with a denture brush or soft toothbrush using liquid hand soap or denture toothpaste. Do not use toothpaste as this may scratch the denture.
- Brush any natural teeth (see *Caring for Natural Teeth* tip sheet) and clean the mouth and gums with a moist toothbrush before reinserting the dentures.
- Store dentures dry overnight to allow the mouth time to rest.
- Visit the dentist regularly.

Caregivers:

- Encourage seniors to remove and clean dentures on their own and support care where needed.
- Always wear gloves to prevent cross-contamination.
- To remove dentures, start with the lower denture. Hold the lower front teeth between the thumb and index finger and lift the denture out.
- For the upper denture, lift the lip and use your fingers to tip the front teeth. It may help to gently rock the teeth back and forth or to lift from the back to break the seal. Be careful not to stick your fingers between the teeth.
- To remove a partial denture, use your fingers to gently pull the metal clasps toward the biting surface of the teeth.
- Be gentle to avoid any damage to the denture or the metal clasps on a partial denture.
- Once the denture is removed, inspect the mouth for any sore spots.
- Clean the denture and any natural teeth (see *Caring for Natural Teeth* tip sheet).
- Allow the senior to reinsert the denture if they are able to. If help is needed, inform the senior in the process. For full dentures, insert the upper denture followed by the lower denture.

IMPORTANT! If you are unable to remove what you believe to be a denture **do not pull**. This may be an implant retained denture and cannot be removed. Consult with a dental professional.