

## Denture Care

“Dentures can benefit appearance and health...”



*Oral Health in Massachusetts: A Fact Sheet*

### The Role of Healthcare Providers in Denture Care

There have been many studies done that link poor dental health to chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and bacterial pneumonia. For this reason, it is important to maintain a healthy mouth, with or without natural teeth. At least annual dental examinations are recommended, even for someone who has no natural teeth, and there are special considerations to be made for those individuals who wear dentures.

### What is the Proper Oral Care for Denture Wearers?

It's important that dentures are removed during sleep each night. Like natural teeth, dentures must be brushed daily to remove food deposits and plaque. Plaque is bacteria that can cause tooth decay on any remaining teeth, irritation of the gums, as well as bad breath. Brushing the dentures daily also helps to prevent them from becoming permanently stained. It's best to use a brush designed for cleaning dentures, though a toothbrush with soft bristles may also be used. Avoid using hard-bristled brushes since they may damage dentures.

Denture wearers, who don't use toothpaste to clean their dentures, may use hand soap or mild dishwashing liquid. Avoid using powdered household cleansers, which may be too abrasive. Also, avoid using bleach, as this may permanently whiten the pink portion of the denture.

#### Steps to cleaning a denture:

- Step One: Fill the bottom of the sink with water; this will prevent the denture from breaking if it's dropped while cleaning.
- Step Two: Rinse away loose food particles thoroughly.
- Step Three: Moisten the brush and apply a denture cleaner, toothpaste or other mild cleanser.
- Step Four: Brush every surface, scrubbing gently to avoid damage. Rinse thoroughly.



1.



2.



3.



4.

Images from: <http://www.denturehelp.com/Pages/DC.html>

## Denture Adhesive

Denture adhesive can help dentures hold tight to the gum tissue more successfully. When applying adhesive to dentures, it is important to only use 3 or 4 dabs, about the size of a pea. Over filling a denture will cause the adhesive to ooze out from the sides of the denture, start sticking to the teeth and even the inside of the cheek. When applying adhesive to an upper denture, the adhesive should be placed on the area that is in contact with the roof of the mouth, one dab in each corner forming a square. For the lower denture, the adhesive should be evenly spaced inside the groove of the denture.

## Nutritional Tips

Nutrition is a main concern for those who wear dentures. Poor nutrition can lead to trauma caused by ill-fitting dentures, including sores that are painful and won't heal. Poor nutrition can also lead to bone resorption, which will make the dentures loose and uncomfortable to wear. It's critical that denture wearers consider food choices that are nutritionally balanced for optimal oral health and general wellness:

- **Vitamin A** – Deficiency of this nutrient may cause white areas on the gum tissue called hyperkeratinization, as well as an increased susceptibility to infection and poor bone development.
- **Vitamin B and Iron** – A common oral effect of a vitamin B or iron deficiency is a burning feeling in the mouth especially the tongue. The tongue may appear shiny, smooth, or even discolored varying from a red to magenta color. Vitamin B deficiency may also cause angular cheilitis (key-lite-is), a painful inflammation or sore in the corners of the mouth, as well as canker sores. Another possible oral effect is oral candidiasis, a fungal infection that causes painful white patches in the mouth.
- **Vitamin C** – Oral effects from not having enough vitamin C could result in bleeding gums, loosening of teeth, and poor healing of oral tissues.
- **Vitamin D and Calcium** – These nutrients promote strong teeth and jaw bones. Sun exposure is a good source of vitamin D. Dairy products and fatty fish, such as salmon and sardines are also good sources of vitamin D, as well as calcium.
- **Fluoride** – Essential mineral for promoting strong teeth and remineralization of enamel, the hard surface of the teeth. Lack of fluoride increases the risk for developing tooth decay.

## Resources

1. "ADA: American Dental Association – Dentures." *ADA: American Dental Association- Home*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 June 2010. <<http://www.ada.org/2996.aspx?currentTab=1#faq>>.
2. "AGD - Publication." *AGD- Academy of General Dentistry*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 June 2010. <<http://www.agd.org/publications/patientnews/electronic/?PubID=2&IssID=936>>.
3. "Dentures – American College of Prosthodontists." *Dentures, Dental Implants, Bridges, Teeth Whitening, Dental Crowns- American College of Prosthodontists*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 June 2010. <<http://www.prosthodontics.org/patients/dentures.asp>>

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