

DENTURE CARE FOR ADULTS WITH A NEURO-DISABILITY



Key points

- Some people with a neuro-disability may find it difficult to wear dentures.
- Dentures should be removed at night, cleaned and stored in a labelled denture container to prevent accidental loss or misplacement.
- Individuals may need support from family or carers to place and remove dentures from the mouth.



Why do some people with a neuro-disability find it difficult to wear or adapt to wearing dentures?

- Limited mouth opening may mean it is not possible to place dentures in the mouth.
- Facial muscles, which help to hold dentures in place, may be weaker. This makes it more difficult for the person to keep dentures stable in their mouth.
- Involuntary jaw or tongue movements can lead to the individual not tolerating dentures.
- Having a dry mouth can lead to dentures becoming uncomfortable and feeling loose. Saliva lubricates the mouth and can help to act as a seal between the denture and the mouth. A lack of saliva can cause dentures to rub against the gums.
- If an individual has spent a long period not wearing a denture, for example during a hospital admission, they may find it more difficult to adapt to wearing a denture.



Types of dentures

A denture is an appliance made of metal or plastic (acrylic) that replaces some or all teeth. There are different types:

- Full or complete dentures, which replace all of the teeth in one arch.
- Partial dentures, which replace one or a few teeth. These may have clasps or clips that hold on to the person's own teeth.
- Implant-retained dentures are retained in the mouth via dental implants (metal screws) that are placed in the jaw bone.



Full Denture



Partial Denture

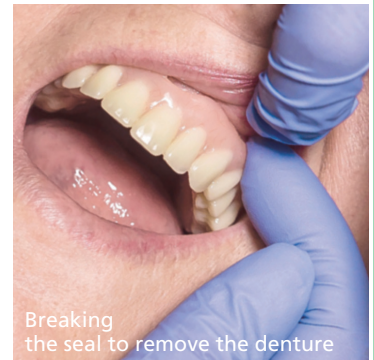


Implants to hold a denture in place



Removing and inserting dentures in the mouth

- Dentures can be removed by sliding a gloved finger under the edges of the denture to help break the seal between the mouth and the denture. Sliding downward for an upper denture and upwards for a lower denture.
- Dentures should be removed and cleaned at night, then stored in a labelled denture container.
- Keeping the denture out of the mouth overnight will help to keep the lining of the mouth healthy and reduce the risk of fungal infections developing under the denture.



Cleaning dentures

- Ideally dentures should be cleaned after every meal and in the evening.
- Clean the denture over a bowl to prevent accidentally dropping and breaking it.
- Use a fragrance-free soap or liquid soap and a denture brush or soft toothbrush. If a person has their own teeth, separate toothbrushes should be used to clean the denture and teeth.
- All areas of the denture must be cleaned, removing any food debris or denture fixative.
- Avoid using toothpaste to clean the denture as this can be abrasive and damage the denture.
- Rinse the denture well with cold water.
- When dentures are not being worn, store them in a labelled denture container to avoid accidental loss.

Regardless of whether the individual has any of their own teeth or not, the rest of the mouth still needs to be cleaned with a toothbrush.

Care must be taken if using denture cleansing tablets or solutions. There have been cases where tablets or solutions have been ingested by people with cognitive impairment or visual problems.



Using a denture adhesive

- Denture fixative can be used to help keep dentures more stable in the mouth. These can be bought at a pharmacy or supermarket.
- Only a small amount of fixative is needed.
- Fixative is quite sticky and needs to be cleaned off daily with soap and a toothbrush or denture brush.



Lost dentures

- When not in the mouth dentures must always be stored in a labelled container to reduce the risk of them being accidentally lost.
- Avoid wrapping dentures in tissues or handkerchiefs when not in the mouth. They can very easily be disposed of accidentally if not clearly labelled in a specific container.
- New dentures can take, on average, 6-8 weeks to remake. Multiple dental visits are needed.
- A lost denture can cause distress to an individual, impacting on their ability to eat, drink, and communicate and on their appearance.
- If a denture is lost contact a dentist as soon as possible.
- Ask the dentist about labelling dentures to help prevent them becoming lost.

Visiting a dentist

- Even someone with no teeth should see a dentist once a year to check the health of their mouth.
- If a person develops ulcers, redness or pain in the mouth they should see a dentist.
- If a denture breaks or feels sharp or rough seek advice from a dental professional.

Further Information

This video available on the Mouth Care Matters website provides information about denture care:

<https://bit.ly/2lug7TP>