



Instructions After Receiving Dentures

(Home Care)

Once getting dentures, some patients find that it takes some getting used to for the first couple of days. However, as long as patients follow the recommendations of their Doctor, they will feel better than before with a brand new smile. Often dentures are placed immediately following some extractions, so patients should be sure to follow instructions in order to heal promptly and properly.

For the first 24 hours, the denture should remain in place unless there is significant soreness or bleeding. The denture functions as a bandage to help clot the blood and begin the healing process, so it is very important for patients to keep the denture in place, even at night while sleeping.

After the first 24 hours, or once instructed by the Doctor, patients should begin rinsing with salt water ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp in 8 oz of water). As the salt rinse cleanses the gums, patients should brush the denture gently with denture cleanser. Other than these two steps, patients should keep their denture in as much as possible to help the healing process.

In order to protect the blood clots that will form, patients should not spit, bend over excessively, drink through a straw or rinse for the first 24 hours. Additionally, patients should avoid strenuous activity and smoking for the first 48 hours. Moreover, it is helpful for patients to sleep in a more upright position to reduce blood flow to the mouth.

Adjusting to Your New Denture

Getting a denture is noticeably different than simply getting one or two teeth extracted. Overall, having many teeth extracted at once for a denture will result in a more tangible change in gum structure and bite. Because of this, dentures will need to be relined a few times throughout the first few months of healing. As the gums heal, the shape and height of them will change, and bone density will also decrease. This is perfectly natural for the first several months, and all initial relines for dentures will be covered in the cost of the original denture payment.

Similarly to getting a single tooth extracted, there are some Do's and Don'ts that patients should follow when they get their dentures:

Do's	Don'ts
Apply ice pack to outside of mouth for the first day	Do not smoke
Bite down firmly on gauze when necessary to stop bleeding; change gauze often	Do not drink from a straw for 3-4 days after extractions
Elevate head with 2-3 pillows when lying down for the first 48 hours; this will help decrease swelling and bleeding	Do not swish liquid, rinse, or spit too vigorously, as the blood clot may be loosened
Eat soft foods or liquid diet for the first 48 hours	Do not drive or operate heavy machinery while taking prescribed pain medication
Rinse mouth with salt water ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of salt in 8 oz of water); Let this soak in mouth for 2-3 minutes	Do not participate in physical activity for the first 2-3 days
Take pain relievers and other prescribed medications as directed	Do not take pain medication on an empty stomach
Start alternating the prescription medication with an NSAID as directed, which will help soreness	Do not drink any carbonated or alcoholic drinks for the first 48 hours

Helpful Tips During Healing

During the first few days, there are many common side effects patients may experience.

Because of these, patients should be aware of how to help these symptoms:

- Minor bleeding can last 2-3 days, but biting down on gauze should help clot the blood and stop the bleeding. It is important for patients not to chew with their new denture for the first few days, as this can loosen the blood clots. It is also important to avoid rinsing, spitting, smoking, and drinking through a straw during this time.
- If there is any moderate or heavy bleeding during the first couple of days, patients should remove the denture and bite down on gauze pads firmly for an hour.
- Swelling will typically peak at 2-3 days following the extractions. For the first 1-2 days, patients should apply ice to the outside of their mouth to help reduce swelling, and sleep in an elevated position.
- Discoloration around the eyes, face, or neck is perfectly normal, and should go away quickly on its own.

- Sore throats can also be common after extractions from swelling, and it should go away in 2-3 days.
- Sore spots can also develop in the mouth during the first few days of wearing the new denture, and this can be alleviated by simple adjustments by the Doctor.

Post-Op Visits and Medication

It is important for patients to take all prescribed medications for the full duration of treatment, especially the antibiotics. If the antibiotic treatment is not completed, patients run the risk of developing an antibiotic resistance. While taking pain medication, it is not uncommon to experience nausea. To avoid this, patients should take their prescribed medication with food, and it can also help to sip on a carbonated drink.

Dentures can take some time to get used to. Patients have reported excess of saliva and difficulty articulating speech, but over time these will subside. Additionally, patients can accelerate getting used to speaking with dentures by practicing constantly and reading aloud. With plenty of practice, patients should be back to speaking normally and confidently in no time at all.

For both the comfort and success of the new denture, it is most important for patients to attend all follow-up appointments and to have their appliance relined when necessary.