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Caring for Your Dentures

There are two types of dentures: full denture and partial denture.

A full denture is made to replace all the teeth in the upper and lower jaw. This type of denture is held in your mouth by your gums, the bone underneath, and soft tissues.

A partial denture is made when you have some natural teeth. Your natural teeth (and gums) are used to hold the partial denture in place. You can have a partial denture made for the upper or lower jaw.

It is important to clean your mouth and partial or full denture daily. Plaque and food will stick to the denture. Soaking dentures in water or a denture cleaner is not enough. They must be brushed with a toothbrush or with a toothbrush made especially for dentures.

Be sure to brush and massage your gums daily with a soft toothbrush, and brush and floss any remaining natural teeth you have. The natural teeth can be harmed if an unclean partial denture rest against it.

- **Do not** clean dentures with boiling water. It will cause the denture to warp.
- Clean all denture surfaces, both inside and outside, with a denture brush and denture cleaner that you can buy at a drug store.
- **Do not** use an abrasive cleaning powder like Ajax™ or Comet™ to clean your denture.
- When cleaning dentures, hold over a bowl of water between your thumb and forefinger. If the denture slips out of your hand, it will land in the water and not break.
- If a denture smells, it can be soaked in a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach (such as Clorox™) in 1 cup of water. Soak the denture for 30 minutes. Rinse well before putting it back in your mouth. **Do not** put a partial with metal clasps in bleach. Bleach will damage the metal on the partial.
- Take your denture out of your mouth for at least eight hours every day. When out of your mouth, keep the denture in a bowl of water, diluted mouthwash, or denture cleaner.
- **Do not** try to adjust a denture with sandpaper or files. This will ruin the denture fit and may cause sores.
- Be cautious with denture adhesives. Remove adhesive each night before overnight soaking.

Go to the dentist for the following:

- Your regular fitting appointments after you get a denture.
- When you have mouth sores that last for more than one week.

- When your dentures become loose in your mouth.
- One time a year to check the health of your mouth and the fit of your denture.
- If you have pain or discomfort with one of your natural teeth.

Resources

NOTE: This fact sheet was derived from one previously published by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

American Dental Association

<https://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/dentures>

American Dental Association – Mouth Healthy

<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/d/dentures>