

# Healthy You

FAST FACTS FOR YOUR HEALTH

## Your Quick Guide to Dentures

If your dentist recommends dentures to replace your permanent teeth, you likely have lots of questions about how they will change your daily life. Here, we've gathered some frequently asked questions and answers about dentures, so you have all the information you need to feel confident taking care of your mouth and navigating this new experience.

### What types of dentures are available today?

There are two categories of dentures: partial and complete. Partial dentures replace some teeth (so, some of your permanent teeth will be intact in your mouth), while complete dentures replace all of your teeth.

Complete dentures have two types: immediate and conventional. As the name suggests, immediate dentures are placed in your mouth immediately after your natural teeth are removed. Conventional dentures, on the other hand, require that your gums heal before they're placed in your mouth, so you'll need to wait a few weeks (anywhere from 6-12 weeks) after your teeth have been removed before they're fitted.

The clear advantage to immediate complete dentures is you don't have to go without any teeth for a period of time, but they do require additional adjustments during the gum healing period. Immediate dentures may be considered a temporary solution until conventional dentures are ready to be placed.

### How often should dentures be renewed or replaced?

Regardless what type of dentures you need, all dentures will need to be rebased, relined or replaced. If you have complete dentures, you can expect to wear them for at least 5 years before you need to have them replaced. Seeing your dentist twice yearly will ensure that your dentures fit properly and comfortably.

### Will dentures change how I eat or speak?

Getting used to dentures takes some time, especially when it comes to eating. Ease into things by eating mostly soft foods cut into smaller pieces. Spend some extra time chewing, and move the food slowly across both sides of your mouth before swallowing. As you gain confidence, begin adding back more foods you enjoy to your diet.

It may take a few weeks for you to feel like you've gotten used to eating with your new dentures. If you find that things are not getting easier or more comfortable, call your dentist to ensure that your dentures are fitted properly.

No matter how long you've been wearing dentures or how accustomed you are to them, certain foods should be avoided while you wear dentures, including chewing gum, sticky foods and extremely hard foods.

Like eating, you may find that you'll need to get used to some changes with speaking. Dentures may change how you say certain words, but fortunately, practicing saying those words out loud will go a long way toward helping you speak confidently and comfortably with dentures.

One thing to keep an eye out for is clicking when you speak. Call your dentist if your dentures make a clicking sound when you speak, or if you find that you have other speech problems that won't go away with practice. In some cases, it could be a fitting issue that your dentist can correct.

### **How do I keep my dentures clean?**

Your dentures should be cleaned every day. Your dentist will explain the process of how to safely clean your dentures and can share specific recommendations for products that are designed to clean dentures. Using these products is important, as other cleaners may be too abrasive and may damage your dentures.

Although boiling water is often used to sterilize items, do not place your dentures in boiling water. Doing so will damage them.

When you are not wearing your dentures, soak them in water or denture-specific cleaning product. And, make sure to store them in a safe place where they can't be knocked over or within reach of children.

### **How does my at-home oral health routine change after dentures?**

Even if you have complete dentures, it's still important to keep your mouth clean and healthy with at-home care. This includes twice-daily brushing of your gums and tongue, and a daily rinse of saltwater to clean your gums. Cleaning your mouth before putting in your dentures is important because it removes plaque, keeping your mouth healthy. If you have partial dentures, make sure to remove them before brushing your permanent teeth.

### **Does Delta Dental of Iowa cover dentures?**

Most Delta Dental of Iowa plans cover at least part of the cost of dentures, but all dental plans are different. The best way to understand your costs is to discuss your specific plan benefits with a Delta Dental of Iowa Customer Service representative. You can call us at 800-544-0718. We also offer a hearing impaired line available 7:30 am - 5:00 pm CST at 888-287-7312.

### **What are some other good questions about dentures that I should ask my dentist?**

- Do I have any other treatment alternatives, or are dentures the best option for me?
- What foods/habits should I avoid with dentures?

What denture cleaning solutions do you recommend?

Should I use denture adhesives? If so, can you recommend a brand/type?

What denture-related pain, discomfort or other symptoms should I look out for that warrants a visit to the dentist?

Will my dental visit schedule change now that I have dentures?

**SOURCES:**

<https://www.webmd.com/oral-health/dental-health-dentures>

<https://www.deltadentalia.com/a-healthy-life/dental-health/the-impact-of-tooth-loss-in-adulthood-and-how-to-avoid-it/>

<https://www.deltadentalia.com/a-healthy-life/dental-health/denture-care-keep-them-clean/>