

# Wearing Dentures ~ Arm Yourself with the Facts



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An entire book could be devoted to dentures, the people who wear them, and how to deal with problems commonly associated with denture wear. We hope that the following information will give you a suitable, basic explanation of those problems which denture wearers sometimes encounter.

The two most important factors to understand about your dentures or partials are –

- They are a replacement for something you have lost; therefore, they are foreign to your body.
- You were not born with the ability to successfully wear dentures. This is particularly true in the case of lower dentures. Patience, practice and experience are necessary before you will be able to keep your denture in place and eat anything you like.

The world of dentures can be intimidating. It is not easy to have to replace a part of us that we have had all of our lives for something that is artificial. In order to deal with the changes it is important to become knowledgeable about what dentures are and how to take care of them. This will make the process and the day-to-day living with dentures a little easier.

## What Are Denturists?

Denturists are licensed professionals who specialize in fitting as well as fabricating your dentures and partials. The lab is on the premises and the person treating you in the chair is the person who is also making your teeth.

## What Are Relines?

A reline is the process of putting a new surface inside your denture. It is indicated when your gums have shrunk to the point that there is a space between your dentures and gum surface. You should not wear your dentures in this condition since your gums may try to “puff” into the ill-fitting dentures in order to compensate for space. This results in an abnormal

gum tissue change that will eventually produce harmful effects. Most patients could profit from a reline about every three years. The number of times a denture can be successfully relined varies with the condition of the denture, the supporting bone and the soft tissues in each person’s mouth. Typically three relines are the limit. After that, you are probably a candidate for a new denture.

## How Often Should Dentures Be Replaced?

There is certainly a great deal of misunderstanding in this area. A well constructed denture may last one hundred years. However, your mouth is living tissue and constantly changing. Although your dentures remain intact, they simply must be remade in order to update the new set of conditions in your mouth. If the changes are only slight, involving loosening for example, then the problem may be dealt with by relining or refitting the inside of your denture. If you have worn the denture for more than eight to ten years, then you should consider a new denture. A classic example of such a candidate is the person whose chin has started to jut forward and upward toward the nose when they close their mouth tightly. You can bet this individual has been wearing dentures much longer than they should have. Your gums are shrinking a little each day, but they do so at such a slow rate that you are not aware of the change. Then one day you look at yourself and notice how badly your face has “sunken.”

These people appear to be 20 years older than they should look or may look “mean” when they actually have a pleasant disposition. More importantly are the possible joint and muscle complications that can arise as a result of constantly closing your mouth too far. Wearing dentures that are too “short” may cause frequent headaches and even hearing problems. Your dentures should be evaluated every two to three years to insure proper fit.

A good denturist will make sure that the dentures look natural. With the proper fit and care, dentures can be a workable and welcome replacement for the loss of teeth. ≠

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