

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR DENTURES

Q **How often should I clean my dentures?**

A It is important to treat your dentures like you would treat your natural teeth. They should be kept as clean as possible to prevent further tooth loss, inflamed gums, or bacterial and fungal infections. We usually recommend that you clean them thoroughly twice a day, and after eating when necessary.

Q **How should I clean them?**

A The general rule is: **brush, soak, brush**. Always clean your dentures over a bowl of water or a folded towel in case you drop them. Brush your dentures before soaking, to help remove any food debris. Soak the dentures in a specialist cleaner for a short time if you prefer and then brush the dentures again - as you would your own teeth, being careful not to scrub too hard as this may cause grooves in the surface. Make sure you clean all the surfaces of the dentures, including the surface which comes into contact with your gums. This is especially important if you use any kind of denture fixative.

Q **What should I use to clean my dentures?**

A There are many different denture-cleaning products. However, most dentists still recommend a small- to medium- headed toothbrush to reach into the awkward corners, or a soft nailbrush, and ordinary soap. Soaking solutions can often help to remove staining and bacteria. We do not recommend that you use these solutions overnight.

Q **Is there anything I should avoid?**

A It is important not to use any type of bleaching product to clean your dentures. Bleaching can lead to weakening of the denture as well as making it look unsightly. Do not use very hot water to soak the denture. Again, it can weaken the denture causing it to break.

Q **What should I do if I have a soft lining?**

A Some people have sensitive gums and may need a softer lining made for their dentures. If you have one of these special linings, it is important to check with your dentist before using any cleaning products or fixatives as some products can damage the lining.

Q **What if I have a metal denture?**

A Some commercial cleaning products can damage metal dentures, so it is important to discuss cleaning options with your dentist if you have these. If your denture has clasps, you need to take particular care when cleaning to avoid damage.

Q **Are there any special products I should use?**

A There are some specialist products available for cleaning your dentures, including special brushes, cleaning pastes and soaking solutions. However, you should use these carefully and follow the manufacturer's instructions. If you are not sure which products to use, ask your dentist.

Q **Should I remove my dentures at night?**

A Most dentists recommend removing your dentures at night to give your mouth a chance to rest. If you remove your dentures, it is important to leave them in water to prevent any warping or cracking.

Q **Can my dentist clean them?**

A Some people do build up tartar on their dentures just as they would on their natural teeth. If plaque is not removed properly, it can react with your saliva and harden into tartar. As with your own teeth, you will not be able to remove this tartar completely yourself and eventually it can make the denture uncomfortable and unsightly. Your dentist will be able to remove this tartar using a professional cleaning machine.

Q **What can I do about staining?**

A Like natural teeth, dentures can pick up staining every day. This is especially true if you smoke, or drink a lot of tea, coffee or red wine. In most cases you should be able to remove this staining with regular cleaning. However, more stubborn stains may take a little more cleaning, which your dentist should be able to help with.

Q **Do I still need to see the dentist?**

A It is important to visit your dentist regularly even if you don't have any of your natural teeth. Dentists do not only check teeth, but also the soft parts of the mouth, including the tongue and cheeks. These examinations are just as important, so the dentist can spot any infections, mouth conditions or even mouth cancer at the earliest stages. Your dentist will be able to tell you how often you should visit.