



# MEMPHIS DENTURES AND IMPLANTS

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## *Immediate denture instructions – before and after your procedure*

### **Before your procedure**

**Take time off** – some patients choose to return to work the day after their procedure, however, this is not the norm. We recommend at least 4 days off from work and required public/social activity; a full week is even better. This is to allow you some recovery time from a major dental procedure, and for you to start getting accustomed to eating and speaking with your new teeth.

**Arrange a driver** – since this is a major dental procedure, most patients choose to take a relaxation/anti-anxiety medication, which will be prescribed by your dentist. While you are under the influence of this medication, you **ARE NOT** legally able to operate a motor vehicle, therefore, you must bring someone with you who can drive you home from your procedure.

### **Items to get ahead of time:**

- the medications prescribed to you by your Memphis Dentures and Implants dentist
- ice packs
- ibuprofen and acetaminophen/Tylenol (if you're able to take them)
- extra gauze
- tea bags (these can be used to help with bleeding if needed, read more on this in the "Caring for yourself after surgery" section)
- liquid and soft foods – Ensure/Boost/Carnation drinks, yogurt
- clothes you don't mind getting blood on
- a pillow you don't mind getting blood on
- extra pillows to prop you up so you can sleep in an elevated position
- wash cloths and/or hand towels for wiping your face
- salt for salt water rinses

## Day of your procedure

- wear clothing you don't mind possibly getting blood on
- bring your prescribed medications with you
- please arrive **with your driver** and take your relaxation/anti-anxiety medication **on-site** 30 minutes before your procedure is scheduled to begin.

**NOTE: you are not legally able to operate a motor vehicle for 24 hours after you have taken the relaxation/anti-anxiety medication. We require that you bring a driver with you.**

## Things you can expect after surgery

- **Bleeding/oozing** – minimal bleeding/oozing should be expected after your procedure. This is completely normal and typically stops within 48 hours.
- **Swelling** – the amount of swelling experienced will vary from patient to patient. Some will swell very little or not at all, others will experience moderate to more significant swelling. Any swelling should subside within 1-2 weeks.
- **Bruising** – the amount of bruising experienced will also vary from patient to patient. Some will not bruise at all, others will have significant bruising. Any bruising will usually be gone within 2 weeks.
- **Increased salivation** – this is your body's natural reaction to a foreign body (your new teeth!) in the mouth. This usually subsides within 72 hours.
- **Pain/discomfort** – some discomfort is to be expected. Your prescribed pain medication will help to alleviate this. An alternative to narcotic pain medications is taking ibuprofen and acetaminophen (Tylenol). These help tremendously and come with fewer side effects.
- **Stiff jaw and jaw muscles** – apply moist heat (ex: warm, damp washcloth) and gently massage area.
- **Sore throat or difficulty swallowing** – this typically subsides within 2-3 days.
- **Itching** – some patients will experience an itching sensation as their tissue heals following their procedure. This is completely normal and typically does not persist beyond the first week.
- **Adjusting to your new teeth** – your denture(s) may feel bulky in your mouth at first and your speech may also feel a little strange. Practice speaking with them as much as possible, especially 'S' words like Mississippi. Most patients adjust to speaking with their new dentures within 1-2 weeks.
- **Potential for breaks** – while dentures are quite durable, they are still a polymer, so it is possible for them to break. Teeth can pop out, cracks can form, etc. The chances of a breakage increase while you're in your healing phase. The main reason for this is that the jawbones are largest immediately following extractions, so there is less room in your mouth for your dentures. As a result, your denture(s) will generally be thinner than regular/replacement denture(s). Also, as you have your soft liners removed and replaced, a small portion of acrylic will be removed, which can weaken the denture some. Don't worry, though, the last step of the healing/re-fitting process will restore full strength to your dentures.

In the event you do experience a breakage during your healing phase, we will repair your denture(s) at no cost to you, and because we understand that this is extremely inconvenient for our patients, we will repair your denture(s) as quickly as possible (the same day in most cases).

### **Caring for yourself after surgery**

- Leave your denture(s) in for the first 24 hours after your procedure. They help control swelling and help control bleeding. Occasionally, after taking your dentures out, patients' gums will swell enough that they are unable to put their dentures back in. If this happens, don't worry, it is completely normal. The swelling should go down and you will be able to get your dentures back in in a few days.
- Come in for your quick post operative appointment at our clinic the next business day after your procedure. At this appointment, we'll check to make sure everything's looking good in your mouth, make any necessary adjustments to your denture(s), and answer any questions you may have.
- Take it easy for the first 72 hours after surgery. Get as much rest as possible.
- Sleep in a reclined 45 degree position. This helps reduce swelling.
- Ice packs – place ice packs on both sides of your face, 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off for the first 1-2 days. There are special ice packs that wrap around your face/head and securely attach. A regular ice pack or a bag of frozen peas and an elastic bandage (such as ACE) also works well.
- Salt water rinses – after coming in for your post-operative follow-up appointment or 24 hours after your procedure, whichever comes first, you can begin warm salt water rinses. Mix 1 teaspoon of salt with 1 cup/8 ounces of warm water and mix thoroughly. In front of a sink, remove your dentures and set them down somewhere safe where they won't be easily knocked on the floor or damaged. Now let the warm salt water gently roll around in your mouth. **DO NOT** swish vigorously. Let the salt water fall out of your mouth into the sink. **DO NOT** spit forcefully. Repeat this until the salt water is gone. Place your dentures back in your mouth right away. Repeat this process 3 times per day for the next 2 weeks, then as needed after.
- Take your prescribed medications as directed.  
**NOTE:** A very effective alternative to narcotic pain medication is with a combination of acetaminophen and ibuprofen. Alternating these two medicines is shown to be as good or better at controlling post surgery pain than narcotic medications, and has far fewer side effects.
  - Start by taking a 650mg dose of acetaminophen/Tylenol (2 pills of 325mg)
  - 3 hours after the dose of acetaminophen/Tylenol, take a 600mg dose of ibuprofen (3 pills of 200mg)
  - 3 hours after the dose of ibuprofen, take another 650mg dose of acetaminophen/Tylenol (2 pills of 325mg)
  - 3 hours after the dose of acetaminophen/Tylenol, take another 600mg dose of ibuprofen (3 pills of 200mg)

Repeat this for at least 3 days after surgery.

**IMPORTANT: Do not take more than 3000mg of acetaminophen/Tylenol or 3200mg of ibuprofen in a 24 hour period.**

- You may feel strange due to the anti-anxiety medication you took before your procedure. This typically subsides within 24 hours, but in some people can persist for up to 1 week.
- Don't pull on your lips or cheeks to look at your surgical areas or teeth. We know that it's exciting and interesting to inspect everything, but putting strain on your sutures/stitches and surgical sites could cause unwanted effects.
- Eat – we recommend starting with a liquid diet, then adding in more solid foods as your extraction sites heal and you become more proficient with your dentures. *See below for recommended foods.* Eating with dentures is much different than eating with natural teeth and can be frustrating at first. With practice and by utilizing the tips below, you will become proficient with your teeth much more quickly.
- Stay hydrated – drink plenty of water. Your body needs it as you heal.
- DO NOT drink using a straw for the first 2 weeks.
- DO NOT smoke. We highly recommend quitting smoking before starting this procedure. Smoking increases the likelihood of dry socket and other complications.
- DO NOT drink alcoholic or carbonated beverages for the first week.
- Tea bags – these can help stop bleeding, **but should only be used as a last resort.** Light bleeding is normal for up to 3 days after your procedure. Also, blood mixed with saliva can look like a lot more than it really is. If you feel that you're bleeding more than you should be, an old home remedy that works really well is using damp tea bags on the extraction sites. Get a tea bag or some tea bags (however many you need to cover the bleeding extraction sites), get them wet, and ring out the excess water. Then take your dentures out of your mouth, place the tea bag(s) on the bleeding extraction sites, and close your upper and lower jaw applying gentle pressure to the tea bags. The tannic acid in the tea leaves will help you clot. These can be changed out as many times as needed if they become saturated. **NOTE:** If you do use the tea bags and leave your dentures out for more than a few minutes, there is a good chance that your gums will swell enough that you won't be able to get your dentures back in. If this happens, don't worry, it is completely normal. The swelling should go down after a few days and you'll be able to get your dentures back in.

### **Caring for your dentures**

- Take them out for several hours every day – this gives your tissue a chance to breathe and get saliva flow to it. This is important for oral health.
- Cleansing tablets – these are great for keeping your dentures clean.  
NOTE: do not soak your dentures in cleansing tablets while there are soft liners in them. The chemicals can soak into your soft liner and irritate your gums.
- Clean your dentures at least once a day with either a denture brush or very soft bristled toothbrush and anti-bacterial soap.

### **Foods to eat after surgery**

When it comes to eating with your new dentures, it is going to be difficult at first and, just like speaking with them, will take some practice. See the “Eating with your dentures” section below for tips.

- dietary supplement drinks (Ensure, Boost, Nestle Resource, Carnation, etc.)
- yogurt
- pudding
- apple sauce
- finely blended smoothies
- milk and protein powder shake
- soups/broth, strain out solid pieces
- protein shakes
- milk
- gelatin (Jell-O)
- smoothies
- pureed vegetables can be added to smoothies
- scrambled eggs
- oatmeal
- mashed potatoes
- soft/overcooked pasta
- cottage cheese
- pancakes
- ice cream/frozen yogurt
- fish
- tender chicken
- avocados
- bananas
- sloppy joes
- chili
- hummus
- cooked pasta
- soft breads
- potato salad
- soups – clam chowder, bisques, etc.
- refried beans
- vegetables, soft
- macaroni and cheese, with overcooked pasta

### **Healing phase**

- Soft liners – these are made of a soft material that is placed in your denture(s). It takes up the extra space that develops between your dentures and your gums as you heal from your procedure. They help improve the fit and comfort of your denture(s). After your extraction sites have sufficiently healed (usually 2-4 weeks), if you’d like to use adhesive with your dentures, powdered adhesives are the best option. **DO NOT** use the gel as these can pull the soft liner out of your denture.
- Adjustments – sore spots are common with dentures and require that you come in for adjustments. Please do not attempt to adjust your dentures at home as this can negatively affect their fit and possibly even ruin them. **NOTE: We CAN NOT** warranty dentures that have been adjusted outside of our clinic.
- Sharp edges in the jawbones after extractions – if you notice what feel like sharp edges around your extraction sites, these are most likely where the jawbones supported the teeth. Over the first few months following your immediate surgery, these will smooth off as your extraction sites and jawbones heal.
- Bone spurs – following your extractions, you could have small slivers of bone begin to work their way out of your gums. This is completely normal. Most bone spurs will work their way out naturally over time; you can sometimes help speed this process up by massaging the gums

near the bone spur. Occasionally, bone spurs will need to be removed by your dentist. Again, these are a completely normal part of the process.

- Reline – this is a refit of your dentures to your gums with hard acrylic after healing. This provides a long-term fit for your dentures. Since your jaws slowly continue to change throughout the remainder of your law, periodic relines will be needed.

### **Eating with your new dentures**

It will take time to become proficient at eating with your dentures. Some tips to help with this:

- Cut your food into small pieces. With dentures, these are much easier to chew than larger pieces.
- Chew with food on both sides of the denture (a small piece of food on the left side and a small piece on the right side). This distributes the bite forces more evenly and helps keep the denture from rocking/pivoting loose.

### **Speaking with your new dentures**

Just like eating, it will take time to become proficient at speaking with your dentures. Some tips to help with this:

- Practice as much as possible, especially saying “s” words like “Mississippi” or “sixty six.”
- If you find your dentures moving around while speaking, securing them with denture adhesive (Fixodent, Poligrip, Secure, etc.) or implants can help.

### **Other important items**

**Physical activity** – avoid high exertion physical activity for 1-2 as these could cause your extraction sites to start bleeding again. However, you can get out and participate in light to moderate activities as soon as you feel up to it.

**Sutures / stitches** – we use different types of sutures, some dissolve on their own, some have to be removed. We know they can be irritating, but it’s important to let them do their job while you heal.

**Adhesives** – These can help hold your dentures in place. While they don’t offer the stability of dental implants, they can offer some additional function and security.

- Powder: Fixodent, Poligrip
- Gel: Fixodent, Poligrip
- Strips: Seabond

**Refits and new dentures over time** – while the majority of change in your jawbones happens in the first 6-12 months after your teeth are extracted, your mouth will continue to change slowly and you will continue to lose bone for the rest of your life. Also, denture teeth will wear down over time and eventually require replacement. For these reasons, you will need to have your dentures re-fitted (relines) or replaced periodically.

## **Implants**

If you struggle to eat and speak well with your dentures, securing them with dental implants can provide significant improvement. They also help to slow or stop the loss of jawbone around the implants so you have a better foundation for your dentures for longer. As few as 2 implants can make a world of difference. Ask your dentist if you're a candidate for implants.

## **Things to remember**

You're going through a major transition with your immediate denture(s). While you should expect there to be some discomfort and some frustration during the healing phase, it will all be worth it when you're eating, speaking, and smiling with your new teeth. We want to thank you for trusting us with your smile and with your health, and if you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

- your Memphis Dentures and Implants team