

**Raymond T. Chu, D.M.D.**  
***Prosthetic and Implant Dentistry***

---

20065 Stevens Creek Blvd. #A Cupertino, CA 95014  
Tel: 408.777.8998 Fax: 408.252.4347 E-mail: raychudmd@aol.com  
Web Address: **WWW.DRCHU.COM**

### **COMPLETE AND PARTIAL DENTURE CARE**

Following the delivery of new dentures there is a variable period time (generally 2-6 weeks) during which patients must adjust and accommodate. New dentures often feel bulky and awkward at first. Soft tissues of the mouth now covered may have been open or left uncovered by a previous denture. This strangeness, although bothersome, is a temporary problem that is usually resolved during the adjustment period.

Patients often state that their relatives or friends had “no problem getting used to their dentures” and that they could chew well from the first day. Unfortunately, patients soon forget the difficult adjustment period once their dentures have become second nature. The ability to function with complete dentures involves learned neuromuscular skills that take time to develop. Although the time required may vary and depend upon such factors as the quality of the remaining ridges, **all** new denture-wearers will require this adjustment period.

Because the new artificial teeth may be placed in slightly different relationships and the plastic denture base may feel bulky, speech patterns are often temporarily interrupted. The muscles of the tongue, lips and cheek must learn to coordinate movement to allow for normal speech. The learning process can be enhanced by practice. Reading aloud is one way to minimize the time required to recover normal speech patterns. Continued difficulty should be brought to our attention.

#### **SALIVA**

A normal response of the body to new dentures is increased salivary flow. The glands try to wash out the strange “foreign body.” This situation may persist for several weeks but will usually disappear within a few days to a few weeks.

#### **EATING**

Again, it will take practice to learn to eat a fairly normal diet with new dentures. During the first several days we recommend a soft diet to allow us to eliminate potential sore spots with a minimum of discomfort and to make the learning period more tolerable. Avoid tough, hard and sticky foods until you become more experienced.

Although some experienced denture patients can eat normal diet including apples, salads, and corn of the cob, this is probably the exception rather than the rule. Most denture wearers will find some restrictions in the foods they can manage. Some points to remember regarding eating and chewing habits:

1. Eat slowly and cut food into small pieces.
2. Although the normal tendency is to chew on either side or the other, denture wearers may function better by chewing with food on both sides over the back teeth at the same time.
3. Avoid, when possible, bringing the lower front teeth forward and against the upper front teeth to cut or incise foods. (This protects the delicate upper front ridge and prevents tipping of the dentures.)
4. If it is necessary to bite using the front teeth try spreading the tongue against the back of the upper denture to keep it in place
5. Try to chew vertically (up and down ) rather than horizontally (side to side.)

#### **SORE SPOTS**

New dentures most always cause some sore spots to develop. These must be relieved during the post-insertion adjustment appointments. The sore spots will not go away until your denture has been adjusted by your prosthodontist. We recommend eating soft foods until the initial sore spots are eliminated. The best home care between appointment for sore spots is to rinse with warm salt water.

#### **WEARING DENTURES AT NIGHT**

There is no question that the healthiest policy is to remove dentures for at least 6 hours daily to allow the soft tissues to breathe and recover. For most patients the most convenient way to do this is to remove the dentures before retiring at night. While out of the mouth they should be soaked in either water or a denture cleaning solution. Such a

practice will maintain much healthier oral tissues, preserve the ridges and underlying bone, and allow the dentures to fit properly for a longer period of time.