

ALDRICH DENTAL CARE

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Partial Dentures

A partial denture is designed to replace one or several missing teeth. You may consider a removable partial denture to replace the missing teeth, if:

- you have missing teeth
- the remaining teeth cannot accept a fixed bridge
- there is not sufficient bone for implants
- finances are limited

Removable partial dentures have been made by dentists and worn by patients for many years. Partial dentures are composed of three different materials. A cast metal base (we use vitallium metal which is nickel and berillium free metal) with clasping arms holds a pink plastic (we use lucitone acrylic) gum tissue and plastic (we use bioform teeth) or porcelain teeth. The metal clasps are silver in color and, depending on the individual circumstances, may or may not be visible when you talk or smile. These clasps are absolutely necessary to hold the partial in place. Their location and design are dictated by the shape and position of your remaining teeth and which missing teeth will be replaced. We will show you where the clasps are to be located in your mouth. Most of the time, the amount of preparation (drilling) of your natural teeth needed to ensure successful clasp design is minimal. Often there is no need for a local anesthetic injection. This is unlike fixed bridgework, which always requires significant tooth reduction for proper design and fit.

If you find that the appearance of the clasps will be objectionable, then you might consider different possibilities. It is common to place crowns on the teeth that are clasped by the metal arms, and then place the clasps **inside** the crowns. This will give you a more natural appearance, but it will add to the ultimate cost of treatment. It involves significant preparation of the natural tooth and you might also want to rethink about fixed bridges or implants.

The base of the partial denture will rest lightly on your gum tissue. At some time in the future it is expected that you will need adjustments to the base. Usually this means an addition of more pink material to the denture base. Clasp arms will loosen and need to be tightened at various times. Weight loss or gain will also affect the fit of the base of the partial.

Although a partial is less expensive than a fixed bridge, which is metal and porcelain cemented into place, there are several possible drawbacks. It is much more bulky than a bridge and is more difficult to wear initially. You may have to adjust the way you speak to accommodate the extra bulk. After awhile, this will not be much of a problem. And depending on the position of the retaining clasps, they may be visible when you talk or smile.

Do not sleep with the partial dentures in place (there are a few exceptions to the guideline and the doctor will advise you if that applies to you). The partial dentures absolutely must be removed during sleep time to be cleaned and give the clasped teeth a chance to rest. Plaque can accumulate on your denture and your gum tissue and if good oral hygiene is not practiced cavities and gum disease can occur. Use a very soft toothbrush to gently brush your teeth and gums at least twice a day, morning and night, and floss at least once a day. Also brush your partial denture morning and night daily with a denture brush and denture cleanser. Always store your partial denture in water when you are not wearing it.

Have Missing Teeth Replaced

Most adults can expect to have 32 teeth. The four third molars, or "wisdom" teeth, are often extracted because they do not grow into the mouth well or there is not enough room for them to remain in proper alignment. It is very unusual to have wisdom teeth replaced. But the other 28 teeth are needed. Your mouth, jaw, and body developed together over millions of years. They are designed to operate together at peak efficiency. When you lose a tooth, the efficiency decreases and function suffers. When you lose a tooth, you lose some ability to chew food properly. This may mean that you either place more stress on the other teeth in order to chew all the food you eat, or you do not chew well enough and what is swallowed is not quite ready to be digested. This can lead to digestive difficulty. Or you might switch to a diet that consists of softer foods that do not have to be chewed as much.

You might have to eliminate certain favorite foods because you cannot chew them thoroughly. For each missing tooth, you lose approximately 10% of your remaining ability to chew food.

Other problems also occur. The teeth adjacent to the space left by the missing tooth will eventually shift. If for example, a lower tooth is extracted, the opposing tooth in the upper jaw will grow slowly (or sometimes quickly) longer in a downward direction into the missing tooth space. This is called *extrusion* or *supereruption*. The teeth on either side of the missing tooth space will move and tilt off their proper vertical axis and drift into the missing tooth's space. This can make these teeth more prone to decay and gum disease because it is much harder to keep the teeth clean when they are not aligned properly. Root structure that is normally covered by gum and bone may become exposed. All this can happen if one tooth is lost. Other major problems can occur if multiple teeth are lost. There is a loss of the arch length, the distance from the back of the last tooth on one side of your mouth to the back of the last tooth on the other side of your mouth. With collapsed bite and loss of vertical dimension, the distance from your chin to the tip of your nose decreases, making your face shorter. Extrusion and movement of your maxillary (upper) alveolar bone until the gum tissue from the upper jaw can touch the teeth or gum tissue of the other jaw causes loss of facial tone and shape. The facial muscles of the cheeks and mouth sink into the edentulous (extraction) site. There can also be severe cosmetic problems when the extracted tooth's space is visible when you talk or smile. This is not a pretty sight to anyone. There is loss of self-image and self-esteem and a feeling that you are getting old. Once you start losing teeth, you can actually start to look old. Losing a tooth is pretty serious. The longer you wait after a tooth is extracted, the more difficult and expensive it can become to make the replacement you need. With very few exceptions, it is better to replace missing teeth as soon as possible. Evolution designed you to chew your food with 28 teeth.

We will discuss with you the type of replacement that would be best suited for you. You can choose to do nothing at all and leave the space or spaces, but as you can tell, this is not usually recommended. You can have a fixed replacement made that could be an implant, a conventional bridge (crowns/caps), a bonded resin bridge, or a combination of implants and bridges. You could also have a removable partial denture made. The advantages of the fixed replacements are that they are not designed to come out of your mouth at any time, they are the easiest to live with, feel more like the original teeth, and are perhaps more cosmetic than removable dentures. A removable partial denture is held in place by metal clasps that may be visible. It is bulkier and may interfere with your speech for a period of time. However, generally, dentures cost less than a fixed replacement.

Your chewing apparatus, jaws, and teeth were evolved to function in a particular fashion. The interaction is complex and marvelous. Loss of teeth degrades this function. Preserve your health. Replace missing teeth as soon as suggested.

PARTIAL DENTURE CARE INSTRUCTIONS

PASTE BRUSH PRODUCTS: DENTURE CREAM, WARNER'S TOOTH POWDER, EFFERBRITE, COMPLETE

DENTURE SOAK PRODUCTS: EFFERDENT SOAK TABLETS OR POLIDENT SOAK TABLETS

1) REMOVE DENTURE AND OR PARTIAL FROM THE MOUTH WHILE YOU CLEAN YOUR NATURAL TEETH
2) BRUSH YOUR NATURAL TEETH IN YOUR MOUTH WITH YOUR REGULAR TOOTHBRUSH AND TOOTHPASTE AND FLOSS THEN RINSE

3) BRUSH YOUR DENTURE AND OR PARTIAL WITH A DENTURE TOOTHBRUSH AND DENTURE BRUSHING PASTE. RINSE OFF DENTURE AND OR PARTIAL. PLACE DENTURE AND OR PARTIAL BACK IN YOUR MOUTH. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU MAY SOAK YOUR DENTURE AND OR PARTIAL IN EFFERDENT OR POLIDENT SOAK TABLETS AS OFTEN AS YOU LIKE.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU CLEAN YOU TEETH AND APPLIANCES TWICE A DAY AND RINSE THEM OFF AFTER MEALS.

4) IF YOU GET A SORE SPOT CALL THE OFFICE FOR AN APPOINTMENT AND WE WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP BUT NEVER DO YOUR OWN ADJUSTMENTS AS IT MAY WORSEN THE PROBLEM OR CAUSE DAMAGE AND ADDITIONAL EXPENSE AS WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR DAMAGE YOU CAUSE.

****** ALWAYS STORE TEETH IN WATER WHEN THEY ARE NOT IN YOUR MOUTH******

NEVER LET THEM DRY OUT BECAUSE THEY WILL CHANGE SHAPE AND MAY NOT FIT

If you have any questions about partial dentures, please feel free to ask us.