

Denture Information for Caregivers

Proper care of the mouth is very important when caring for an elderly adult with a denture or “plate”. Some elderly adults will go weeks or months with denture sores without telling anyone. The person may have pain, infection and problems speaking or eating and they may feel unhappy with their smile. They may stop wearing the denture all together and eat by “gumming” foods. It becomes very hard for them to eat healthy foods. This causes them to lose weight or have other health problems.

What can I do as a caregiver?

1. Find out how old the denture is. New dentures may require more adjusting and be more uncomfortable at first.
2. Check to see if the older adult has [sores](#) on their gums or tongue. If so, make an appointment for the dentist to adjust the denture and place soft gum like material in the denture to help cushion it.
3. Offer the older adult nutrition shakes while they adjust to their new denture to make sure that they get the proper nutrients.
4. Encourage them to take out their dentures for at least 4 hours a day. Store them in a solution (water is okay) to help hold their shape.
5. If you notice weight loss, a dentist should look at the gums and dentures. Weight loss can trigger changes in denture fit.
6. Discourage the elderly adult from using a large amount of denture cream in order to use a poor fitting denture. Denture creams can work well when used properly. A small amount can be used to “seal” the denture.
7. Schedule regular dentist appointments so the dentist can check the elderly adults’ partial “plates”. Clean the teeth that help hold the partial plate in place. Remind the elderly adult to clean and brush their dentures daily to remove bacteria and food particles (which can lead to gum irritation and infection).

When do I take my older adult to the dentist for [dentures](#)?

Dentists can help patients that are making a transition into dentures for the first time, or patients who have had their dentures for a long time. They can “adjust” the denture by grinding down the denture material in spots, or they can refit the denture by “relining” or “rebasing” depending on what is needed. Denture sores can happen, but should not be ignored. Take special care and make sure that your older adult is visiting the dentist regularly. Some dentists visit nursing or assisted living homes in mobile dental offices. This can be a great way for patients to get the dental care they need.