

LETTER OF DENTAL INFORMATION: DENTURES

To OUR PATIENTS: In order to better serve you we ask all potential denture candidates to read and sign this document before accepting such an irreversible procedure. Misinformation and unrealistic expectations typically lie at the root of an unacceptable denture and an unhappy patient. Below are the facts and limitations regarding dentures. None can be ignored or underestimated for each will be encountered on a continuing basis for the rest of one's life once treatment is accepted.

1. Dentures are prosthetic teeth. They are fake or false, much the same as prosthetic hip or foot. They are a manmade substitute for a sophisticated natural chewing machine. Much like a crutch, their performance will never match that of their natural counterparts.
2. The functions a denture can be expected to perform are not simple and should not be taken for granted. Learning to eat and speak with a denture will demand new movements from old muscles and will take time and patience. Trouble will be encountered, patients will get tired and sore mouths, and will need to be seen for adjustments. The mouth will not form calluses. The adjustments are not scheduled appointments. They are done as necessary and are worked into the doctor's schedule.
3. Bone is the support for the denture, not gums. The more bone one has the more support, stability, and function a denture will exhibit. That same bone is a continually depleting resource for anyone who wears a denture. The stress of living bone created by a denture causes a gradual but inevitable wear down. Their support wears down and a reline is necessary. Each time a reline is needed (3-5 years) there is less bone available for support and consequently less effective denture.
4. Teeth in normal dentition act as stops for the closed jaw. Losing teeth can allow the jaw to overclose. Given time, the muscles will accommodate the overclosure. If dentures are then made at a later date, the muscles will have to go back to speaking and chewing in the old position. This can cause temporary muscle aches and awkward speaking.
5. An immediate denture is placed in the mouth the same day the teeth are removed. This denture does not necessarily have an ideal fit, and if it does it will not for long. Extracting teeth creates a wound in the mouth. Initially there is swelling in the area to allow plenty of repair cells. The swelling can make the denture seem very stable, but within a week there is rapid shrinking with a resulting loose denture. Soft tissue conditioning which give the denture a more functional status temporarily. Bone will continue to shrink for approximately six months and then stabilize. At that time a new permanent denture or hard laboratory reline is recommended. A lab reline requires the patient to go without the denture for one day.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I have had the opportunity to discuss any questions I may have regarding the foregoing with my treating dentist:

PATIENT'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____