

Dentures

Information for patients

This leaflet explains what dentures are and how to look after them. If you have any queries or concerns, do not hesitate to contact one of the dentists caring for you.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name and date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.
Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

What are dentures?

Dentures replace lost or missing teeth. They are made of acrylic (plastic) or metal. There are two types:

- A 'complete' or 'full' denture fits over your gums and replaces all of your natural teeth in either the upper or lower jaw.
- A 'partial' denture may hold on to your natural teeth with metal clasps and replaces one tooth or a few missing teeth.

How soon can I have dentures after my teeth are taken out?

Usually we can fit dentures straight after your teeth have been taken out. These are called immediate dentures.

You can use immediate dentures, while your gums heal. However, bone and gums can shrink over time, especially during the first six months following the removal of your teeth. If your gums shrink, your immediate dentures may need relining, adjusting or replacing.

Alternatively, you can wait until your gums have healed and then have your dentures put in. This can give you a better fit and they will not need replacing so soon. The healing process takes four-six months.

How long does it take to make my dentures?

You need to have five or six appointments with the dentist beforehand for them to take impressions and measurements of your mouth.

After we have made your dentures you should have appointments with your dentist regularly, so they can check the rest of your mouth for any problems and check the fit of your dentures.

Will dentures make me look different?

A complete or full denture replaces your natural teeth and gives support to your cheeks and lips. We can make dentures to closely match your natural teeth.

Will I be able to eat with dentures?

Eating can take a bit of practice. Start with soft foods cut into small pieces. Some people prefer to take their dentures out while eating.

Will dentures change how I speak?

Pronouncing certain words may take practice. Reading out loud and repeating difficult words will help.

Your denture fit

If your gums shrink a lot, you may need to use a fixative to hold your dentures in place. There is much less gum support in the lower jaw, so the lower denture may feel looser than the upper as it has to be balanced between your cheeks and tongue. If you have a partial denture you may have clasps on it to help hold it in place.

Caring for your dentures

You must clean your dentures twice a day, as you would your teeth. You must also take out your dentures at night to allow time for your mouth to breathe.

How long will my dentures last?

As long as you look after your dentures, they should last several years.

However, your dentures will need to be relined or re-made because of normal wear or a change in the shape of your mouth. Bone and gum ridges can shrink, causing your jaws to meet

differently and your dentures to become looser.

Are there any alternatives?

- You may be able to have a bridge, but your teeth need to be healthy enough to support it. Bridges are cemented onto existing teeth or implants, and can only be removed by a dentist.
- You can have implants, but these are generally not available on the NHS.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located at King's College Hospital, Camberwell on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net

You can also contact us by using our online form at www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.