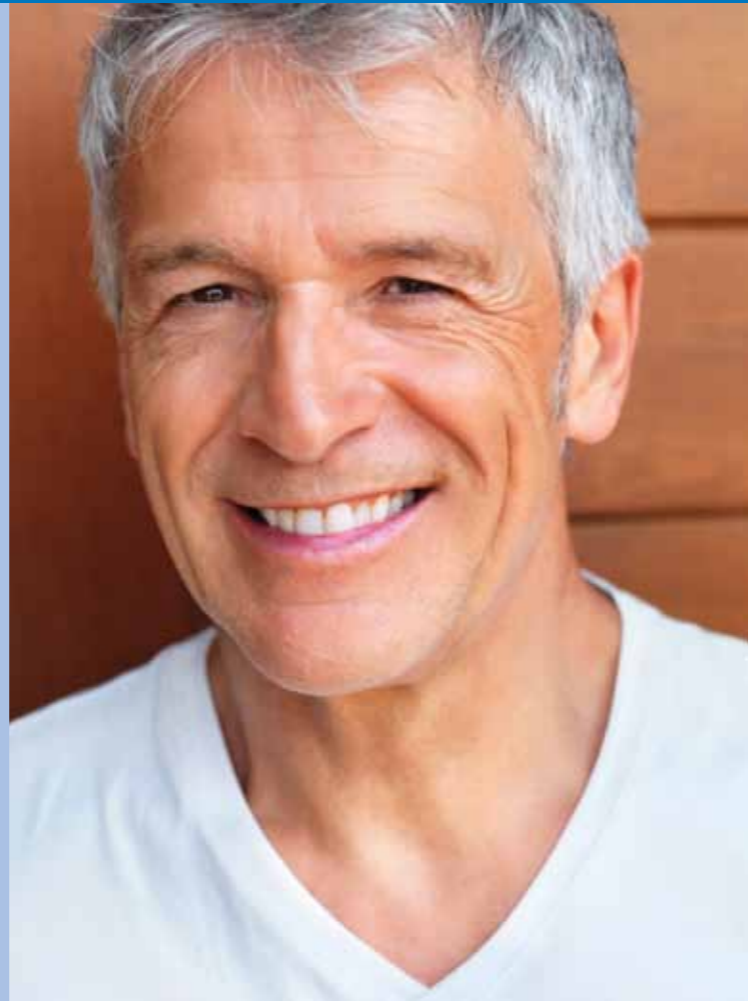


# Removable Partial Dentures

Produced in cooperation with the  
American College of Prosthodontists



**If you have missing teeth,  
a removable partial denture  
is one way to replace them.**

**Partial dentures have several benefits. For one thing, they can make it easier for you to chew food. They can also help you speak better if your speech has changed due to missing teeth. Removable partial dentures can support cheeks and lips so the face does not sag and make you look older.**

A missing tooth is a serious matter. Teeth are made to work together. When you lose a tooth, the nearby teeth may tilt or drift into the empty space. The teeth in the opposite jaw may also shift up or down toward the space. This can affect your bite and place more stress on your teeth and jaw joints. It may be harder to clean teeth that have shifted, which could lead to tooth decay and gum disease. That is why it is important to replace missing teeth.

Removable partial dentures usually have replacement teeth fixed to a plastic base that matches the color of your gums. The plastic base may cover a metal framework. Partial dentures often have some form of clasp that attaches to your natural teeth.

Sometimes your dentist may also recommend crowns, or "caps," on your natural teeth. Crowns may improve the way a removable partial denture fits your mouth. Ask your dentist which kind of removable partial denture is right for you.



Partial denture outside of mouth



Partial denture on the gum



Partial denture in the mouth  
(showing clasps)



## Your New Removable Partial Denture

It takes practice to put in and take out a removable partial denture. It may feel odd or tight for the first few weeks. But in time, you should get used to it. Never force it into place by biting down. This could bend or break the clasps or damage your teeth. If you have a problem with your new partial denture, talk to your dentist. It may need an adjustment.

Removable partial dentures should not be worn 24 hours a day. Your dentist may tell you to take out the partial denture at bedtime and put it back in when you wake up. Usually your dentist will make follow-up appointments to look for pressure points or sore spots. He or she will adjust your denture so it fits comfortably.

## Eating and Speaking

When you replace missing teeth, eating is much easier. But it takes practice. Here are some things that can help:

- Begin by eating soft foods cut into small pieces.
- Chew on both sides of the mouth to keep the pressure even.
- Do not eat very sticky or hard foods or chew gum.

Missing teeth can sometimes make it hard to speak clearly. Wearing a removable partial denture can help. If at first you find some words hard to say, practice by reading out loud in front of a mirror. With time and practice, you should be able to speak well.



## Adjustments and Repairs

As you get older, the fit of your removable partial denture can change. Your bone ridges can shrink, making a space under the denture. Food can get trapped. The denture clasps also may get loose from normal wear.

If the partial denture needs adjusting, do not adjust it yourself. You can harm both the denture and your health. A badly adjusted partial denture can cause sores and irritation. Do not use household glues to repair the partial because they can have harmful chemicals.

See your dentist as soon as possible if your removable partial denture breaks, cracks, chips, or if one of the teeth becomes loose. Or your partial denture may need to be modified if you lose one of the supporting teeth. Sometimes dentists can make the repairs, often on the same day. Complex repairs can take longer. The sooner you make an appointment, the sooner you have a well-fitting partial denture again.

Your dentist will tell you how often to go for dental appointments. Regular exams and professional cleanings are very important to keep a healthy smile.

## Caring for Your Removable Partial Dentures

Like natural teeth, you must take good care of your removable partial dentures.

Here are some tips to care for them:

- **Clean your partial denture each day.** Take it out of your mouth and carefully rinse off loose food particles. Wet the brush and put the denture cleaner on it. Brush all the surfaces gently to keep from damaging the plastic or bending the clasps.
- It is best to **use a special brush made for cleaning dentures**, but you can use a toothbrush with soft bristles. Do not use hard-bristled brushes because they can damage dentures.
- A liquid soap can be very effective when used with a denture brush. However, toothpaste should not be used to clean dentures. Some toothpastes have abrasive particles that can damage the denture base and teeth.
- Your removable partial denture is very delicate and can break if dropped even a few inches on a hard surface. **Stand over a folded towel** or a sink filled with cool water when holding your partial denture.
- **Keep your partial denture in water when you are not wearing it.** Do not let it dry out or it can lose its shape.
- Your dentist can tell you how to care for your partial denture and if you should use a denture soaking solution.
- Rinse the partial denture well after using any denture cleanser. It may contain chemicals that are not intended to go into the mouth.
- Look for denture cleansers with the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance, a symbol of safety and effectiveness.
- **Brush your natural teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice each day and floss them daily.** Take extra care when cleaning teeth that fit under the denture's metal clasps. Plaque trapped under the clasps can raise the risk of tooth decay. Your dentist or dental hygienist can show you how to properly brush and clean between the teeth.
- **Keep your denture away from curious children and pets** when you are not wearing it.

