

## CARERS INFORMATION SHEET 2 - INSTRUCTIONS FOR DENTURE CARE

It is important to treat dentures like natural teeth as harmful dental plaque (a film of soft debris, and bacteria) continuously builds up on the surfaces of the denture, in the same way as it does on natural teeth. Plaque can cause inflamed gums, bad breath, bacterial and/or fungal infections (eg Candida), or where there are remaining teeth, dental decay. Some people also build up tartar on their dentures just as they would on their natural teeth making the denture uncomfortable and unsightly. For all of these reasons it is important to clean dentures at least once daily.

- Wash and dry hands before and after carrying out any mouth care and wear appropriate personnel protective equipment - gloves, apron and eye protection.
- All mouth care equipment (toothbrush, denture brush, denture cleaning paste, toothpaste, denture pot etc) should be identified with the resident's name.
- Clean thoroughly at least once a day (preferably at night) and rinse under water after meals.
- All dentures, both partial and complete, should be removed from the mouth for cleaning.
- Dentures are very delicate and can break easily if dropped. When handling dentures, always hold them over a towel or basin of water.
- Rinse dentures thoroughly to remove loose food particles and brush immersed in warm water to prevent splatter - hot water can warp dentures.
- Use denture cleaning paste or liquid soap on a toothbrush or denture brush. Avoid very stiff bristles as these may damage the denture. Toothpaste is not recommended as this can be abrasive and damage the denture.

- Rinse dentures well to remove all traces of cleaning paste or soap before putting them back in the mouth.
- Brush all surfaces of the denture thoroughly paying particular attention to the surfaces that fit directly onto the roof of the mouth, or the lower jaw, and to any metal clasps on the denture.
- Brush gums, tongue and palate with a soft-bristled regular toothbrush to remove plaque and stimulate circulation.
- Dentures should be removed overnight but where this is not possible then they should be removed for a short period during the day. This will allow the mouth to rest from the pressure of the dentures.
- When out of the mouth (either at night or during the day) dentures should be stored in water as this helps to keep them from drying out and changing shape.
- Loose or ill-fitting dentures can cause problems such as ulceration, therefore a dental assessment may be appropriate.
- Dentures should be clearly labelled with the individual's name.
- Bleaching products, eg Miltons can be very effective for denture cleaning but dental advice should be sought about an appropriate protocol for its use in the 'care home setting'.
- Where the mouth looks very red or sore, or where there is 'thrush' (usually white and speckled) the denture can be soaked in chlorhexidine solution for the recommended time and then rinsed thoroughly. Dental advice should also be sought.