

## What is a denture?

- A denture, sometimes called a 'plate' and more properly called a prosthesis, is a method of replacing missing teeth.
- It is not fixed permanently in the mouth and has to be removed for cleaning.

## Are there different types of denture?

- Yes there are basically two types – full and partial – and as the names suggest a full denture replaces all the teeth and a partial replaces a number of missing teeth fitted in between the remaining natural teeth.
- They are made from either all acrylic (gum and tooth coloured plastic material) or a combination of cast cobalt chromium alloy and acrylic.
- Metal based dentures are usually stronger and better than all acrylic ones but they all have their place.

## But implants and bridges are fixed – why would I have a denture instead?

- It is true that fixed implants and bridges have advantages over dentures. But they have disadvantages too.
- Implants require surgical treatment stages which many may feel apprehensive about. Their sophistication and technical demands mean they carry a higher fee and the amount and quality of bone available is not always good enough.
- Bridges are permanently supported by natural teeth and require the involvement and reshaping of one or more other teeth. This means the loss of healthy tooth tissue and complex problems when the supporting teeth break down as numerous teeth are then linked together.

## So what advantages do dentures have?

- There is no surgery required.
- Some clients feel they are more affordable as they replace numerous teeth with one restoration.
- Partial dentures do sometimes require other teeth to be reshaped, sometimes by crowning. This will usually be on teeth that are already damaged by large fillings and so the teeth can be strengthened and improved cosmetically into the bargain.

## What are their disadvantages?

- The fact that they tend to be more bulky than bridges and implant crowns and that they have to be taken out for cleaning.
- They are not rigidly fixed and although it is usually possible to gain very good retention for them there is not the same degree of confidence that a denture will stay in place compared with a fixed alternative.
- Finally they are just not as good at chewing as fixed teeth.

## Do dentures look false?

- They can do - but so can crowns and implants. It depends on how well they are made – and at Illume we use excellent technicians and laboratories.
- Dentures can usually be made to look very lifelike and natural but because of the nature of the way they are made and fitted there are sometimes some metal components that can be seen when speaking and smiling. We try to minimize this effect by careful design.

## What if I lose further teeth?

- Often dentures can be relatively easily added to although following extractions the mouth often changes shape and the fit deteriorates over time.



## Will I need to use a denture fixative?

- Very rarely with partial dentures, especially ones made using a very accurate metal casting.
- Upper full dentures are very often really well retained and rarely require fixatives.
- The same cannot be said for full lower dentures which are very difficult to tolerate for many people and best avoided.

## How do I decide what is best for me?

- In the same way as usual – a full discussion with the clinician to examine the pros and cons in your particular case.
- This means that we often need x-rays, models and photographs to plan treatment and explore all the possibilities before you make your decision – the best decision for you.

