

Complete Denture Integration: Coalescence of Non-Vital and Vital Elements

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Edentulism is considered as quandary for patients who are left with no more natural teeth. There are many ways to replace teeth, but well-made dentures can be a very cost-effective way to achieve a satisfactory outcome. It is dentist's duty to build confidence in these patients and to provide a good denture. The level of acceptability of denture depends upon trust shared between

dentist and the patient. The reinforcement step is at the time of denture delivery when dentist can clearly make up patient's mind to bring out best of both prosthesis and the patient.

The instructions to patient should be clear, affirmative and in concise language so that patients understand their role in bringing success to denture.¹ Educating patient about denture and about the special problems associated with wearing complete dentures, helps to create a positive attitude and ways to overcome these problems.

There is concept of four C's on the part of a dentist while dealing with a denture wearer post-insertion.¹

- 1. Clear:** The instructions should be clearly understood by the patient for positive reinforcement. A printed form of instructions or message from dentist can instil confidence in patient and let him know that success depends also upon his cooperation.¹
- 2. Consistent:** Consistency is the key of success. There should be continuous effort from Dentist to bring the best out of a patient to adapt with dentures. This is a complex process so there should be consistent guidance from dentist that patient follows.
- 3. Corrective:** The execution of wrong practices can deprive someone from the best usage of the prosthesis. The dentist plays very important role in corrective phase of denture wearing.
- 4. Connected:** The dentist must stay connected with patient during the early phases of denture wearing. The patient should not be missing on his appointments

or no hesitation to call dentist when he need some help.

Apart from dentist, the bigger role is to be played by patient himself. The post-delivery phase of denture wearing can be divided into following four parts, presenting challenges and problems faced by patient.²

1) Adaptability phase: The adaptation phase may be called as time needed to accommodate the new denture into oral cavity. The main factor determining the success of adaptation to the dentures is biological as a sum of all the manifestations of organism reactivity to presence of the dentures in oral cavity. This initial phase needs maximum motivation and a lot of patience so that patient can have the correct mental management and awareness of the need to use the prosthesis.

Denture is a foreign body in the oral cavity that acts as an irritant to oral mucosa leading to increased salivary flow, altered speech, chewing, deglutition, and vomiting. The adaptation to the denture develops gradually and brings it to habituation within 10 to 30 days. The adaptation phase is further divided into 3 phases depending upon the time post-delivery.^{3,4} The first phase is the phase of strong irritation that is observed initially at the time of receiving complete dentures. This phase is characterized by patient's increased awareness about the dentures and a foreign body sensation. There is increase in salivary flow, altered speech, decrease in masticatory strength and vomiting reflex.⁵

The second phase is the phase of partial braking that spans during first to fifth day post insertion. During this phase salivary flow is restored to normal, speech is normalized, vomiting reflex disappears and the chewing efficiency improves.

The third phase is the phase of full braking that spans during fifth to 33 days post insertion. During this phase the feeling prosthesis as a foreign body disappears, muscular and ligamentous apparatus acclimatize to the occlusion and functional capacity is achieved.^{2,5}

1. Learn to manipulate your dentures: Wear, Look, Eat and Speak. Mostly patients require about 2 – 3 weeks to learn to use new dentures. Few patients may require more time but they are never to be discouraged.⁶

2. No more natural teeth: There is no comparison of natural teeth to any other artificial substitute. Just remember the fact that "Having dentures is better than being without teeth".

- ❖ Start eating with soft foods and taking small bites bilaterally.
- ❖ Avoid biting with the front teeth because it will cause the dentures to become unstable.

3. Practice makes denture perfect: When you wear denture for first time, the speech may sound different and difficult to you but just

practice.

- ❖ Speak in front of mirror
- ❖ Read aloud from a book or newspaper.

B. Adjustment phase:

1. Follow up appointments after the dentures insertion are very important as it is necessary to make minor adjustments to provide a more comfortable fit.
2. Most patients will require adjustments of their attitude and habits to wear dentures successfully.
3. In case of soreness, that is considered an unexpected problem, make an appointment with dentist as this irritation will not disappear by itself. If unable to reach your dentist then remove the dentures to prevent further trauma to the tissues.⁷

C. Cleaning of denture: The dentist must teach patient that taking out your dentures for cleaning is not just simple to do, but it's extremely important to do. Just like natural teeth, dentures can build up plaque and tartar that can irritate gums, stain the denture teeth, and harbour bacteria and fungus. The dentures and supporting ridges must be cleaned carefully after each meal to avoid denture odour.⁶

Brushing should be performed at least once a day to avoid build-up of plaque. The gums need to be cleaned and massaged with a soft brush. Clean the dentures with liquid detergent and brushing with a soft denture brush over a towel or a sink partially filled with water. Dropping the denture on a hard surface can result in breakage of denture.⁶ At night time, soak the dentures in a denture cleaner. Rinse thoroughly with clean water before reinserting the dentures. Always keep the dentures wet when not wearing them to prevent warping.

D. Oral Health Maintenance Phase: Explain patient in simple words, the experience of using a new complete dentures. Dentures keep the gums protected and that means that over time dead skin cells will build up underneath them. If you are always wearing your dentures, there is a good chance that fungal infection will grow on these dead cells. So as a rule of thumb, denture should be removed regularly i.e. when sleeping.

As wearing a denture is a complex process so patient must exercise care with the tissue beneath the dentures. It is recommended to rest the tissues at least eight hours a day. Most of patients find it more convenient to leave the dentures out at night. As the tissues that support dentures are constantly changing that may make them loose. With time, dentures will need either refitting or replacement. Annual examinations of the supporting tissue for abnormalities and to assess the function and fit of the denture are important for oral health.⁶

References:

References are Available on request at editor@healtalkht.com