

Dentistry — Advice Letter for a Patient Receiving Their First Complete Denture

THE CASE NOTES

Patient: Mr Albert Nwachukwu, 71 years old; complete lower denture fitted today; no prior experience with dentures

Wearing and adjusting: Wear during the day; remove at night to allow gum tissues to rest; adjustment period is normal — takes 4–8 weeks to feel comfortable; speech may sound different initially (practice reading aloud)

Eating with the new denture: Start with soft foods cut into small pieces; chew on both sides simultaneously rather than biting with front teeth; avoid hard, sticky, or chewy foods initially

Oral hygiene: Remove and rinse after every meal; brush the denture with a soft toothbrush and non-abrasive denture paste (not regular toothpaste — too abrasive); clean over a folded towel or bowl of water to prevent breakage if dropped; soak overnight in cold water or a denture cleaning tablet solution

Tissue care: Brush gums, tongue, and the roof of the mouth with a soft brush every morning before inserting the denture — stimulates circulation and removes bacteria

When to call the clinic: Severe soreness not improving after 2 weeks, a crack or break in the denture, or the denture becomes very loose — contact the clinic for adjustment

Review: 2-week review appointment booked — bring the denture and wear it to the appointment if possible

Task: Write an advice letter to Mr Nwachukwu explaining how to wear, care for, and adjust to his new denture.

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WHAT TO INCLUDE

+ Remove at night to rest the tissues, soak overnight in water or solution

Wearing a denture continuously without a rest period causes chronic tissue irritation and changes the fit over time. This is the single most important wearing instruction.

+ Use denture paste — not regular toothpaste — and clean over a towel or bowl

Regular toothpaste scratches acrylic denture surfaces, trapping bacteria. The towel/bowl instruction prevents breakage — the most common and costly denture accident during cleaning.

+ The adjustment period is normal — 4 to 8 weeks

Setting the expectation that discomfort and difficulty eating are temporary prevents the patient from abandoning the denture in the first two weeks, which is common without this preparation.

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

– Technical details of how the denture was made or fitted

The patient needs to know how to live with the denture, not how it was constructed.

– All possible foods to avoid

Give the principles — soft foods, cut small, chew on both sides — and let the patient generalise. A page of prohibited foods is not read or remembered.

CRITERION IN FOCUS · GENRE & STYLE

OET Case Notes

Dentistry · Beginner · Advice letter · to Patient

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A first-time denture advice letter is often written for older patients who may be unfamiliar with dental terminology and anxious about the change to their daily life. The tone must be warm, clear, and normalising — difficulties are expected and temporary, not signs of failure. Instruction density should be moderate: enough for independence, not so many that the patient is overwhelmed. This calibration — encouraging and practical — is the Genre & Style standard for this letter type.

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