



## TEMPORARY PARTIAL DENTURE ("FLIPPER") INSTRUCTIONS

Learning to wear a flipper takes time and patience. The first few weeks will be a period of adjustment—your flipper will probably need to be adjusted by the dentist or trained dental assistant, and you will need to adjust to wearing the flipper. The following suggestions will help to answer some questions you may have.

### COMFORT

Soreness may develop in one or more areas of the gums, during the period of adjustment.

If your teeth were extracted today, do not remove the flipper until you return tomorrow for the first adjustment. (If the flipper is removed after immediate placement following extraction, the tissues may swell enough to prevent the replacement of the flipper for a few days!)

If no teeth were extracted today, please wear your flipper for at least the four hours just prior to any adjustment appointment, so that we can more easily see the areas that need to be adjusted.

NEVER TRY TO ADJUST YOUR OWN FLIPPER! (We don't want you to incur a fee to repair the flipper if it breaks while trying to adjust it.) After each adjustment visit, warm salt rinses (either with the flipper in place or without it) are the best remedy for sore spots. Mix about ½ teaspoon of salt in an 8-oz. glass of warm water, swish a small amount of the solution near the sore spots for several seconds (spit), and repeat until the entire glass is finished. This can be done every hour, as needed. Please note that ***rinsing can help a sore spot to feel better, but it won't help the area to heal if no adjustment has been done.***

Please note that your flipper can act like an orthodontic retainer—it can keep the remaining teeth in exactly the same position. ***If a flipper is not worn, for any reason (discomfort, sickness, etc.), for enough time, the teeth can shift positions enough to not allow the flipper to fit anymore!*** The amount of time it takes for teeth to shift varies with the individual patient—for some, it only takes a few days. If you have soreness associated with your flipper, please call for an adjustment appointment immediately.

Do not form habits of loosening your flipper with your tongue or lips, or of biting in unnatural positions. Please DO NOT use any adhesive or home relining material inside your flipper, unless directed to do so by the dentist. If you have an issue with the flipper's retention, please discuss it with us.

## **EATING**

A flipper is designed only for esthetics (“looks”), not for eating. However, most patients learn to eat with their flippers in place. You should begin by chewing relatively soft food that is cut into small pieces. Take small bites, and chew on both sides of your mouth at the same time. Hard or chewy foods (raw vegetables, french bread, etc.) should be avoided until after your period of adjustment. It may be necessary to remove and clean the flipper/rinse your mouth after eating.

## **SPEECH**

At first, you may have trouble speaking clearly with your flipper, especially due to the new position of the tongue against it. Your tongue is fantastically adaptable; it can adapt to almost any change in a week’s time. You can gain confidence in your speech more quickly by practicing speaking more often, such as reading aloud.

## **CLEANING**

Use warm—NOT HOT—water to clean or soak your flipper. Brush your flipper thoroughly at least twice a day with a denture brush. Do not use regular toothpaste or any other abrasive cleaner (for example, baking soda) on any flipper teeth that show in your smile, because these will scratch and dull the plastic denture teeth, causing them to appear less natural. You may use either “denture” toothpaste or any non-abrasive liquid soap to clean the dentures with the brush. You may soak the flipper periodically in one of the commercial soaking solutions labeled for use with partial dentures, found in any drug or grocery store.

When your flipper is out of your mouth, it should be kept wet (either in water, a water/mouthwash solution, or a commercial soaking solution). If the flipper acrylic (plastic) is allowed to dry out for too long, it may distort or be more likely to crack or break.

## **TISSUE HEALTH**

We recommend quite strongly that you **DO NOT** wear your flipper for approximately 8 hours each day, either while sleeping or during the day. Research has shown that constant day-and-night pressure on the tissues beneath your flipper contributes significantly to the amount and degree of deterioration of the bone, and shrinkage of the gums with it. A painless fungus infection develops in the gums if they are covered by the flipper all day and night (removing the flipper for cleaning isn’t enough time for the gums to “breathe”).

Remember to continue to properly brush and floss your remaining teeth daily.

**Please call us at (504) 347-6000 if you have any questions  
or need an adjustment appointment.**