

Patient Instructions: Caring for Your New Teeth

Now that you have your new dental restorations, it is important you ensure their lasting strength and beauty. Proper homecare will preserve their original shine as well as maintain the health of your surrounding gum and bone. By avoiding certain foods and habits, you will minimize the threat of breaking or discoloring your new teeth.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I best care for my dental restorations?

Daily brushing and flossing are necessary to maintain the health of your teeth and dental work. Use a soft toothbrush with an appropriate toothpaste. Many types of toothpaste, including all “whitening” toothpastes, are too abrasive and will take the shine off your restorations. Your dental provider will suggest a toothpaste with a low abrasive index and preferably with fluoride to keep your natural teeth strong.

The use of an appropriate mouth rinse is an effective way to promote your dental health. Your dental provider will suggest a non-acidic mouth rinse that contains both fluoride and xylitol. Avoid using mouth rinses that contain alcohol as these tend to burn your tissue and break down the cement that keeps your dental restorations in place.

2. How can I best care for my dental restorations?

Your dental restorations should look and feel like a natural part of your mouth. You will be able to enjoy a wide variety of foods with your new teeth. Having said that, there are certain foods and eating habits that are prudent to enjoy in moderation or avoid altogether.

To decrease the risk of chipping or debonding a dental restoration, try to avoid:

- Using your teeth to scrape or pull meat off a bone
- Biting into raw carrots or other very hard foods
- Chewing toffee or other dense, sticky foods

To decrease the risk of staining or dulling your restorations, try to enjoy the following in moderation:

- Intensely colored foods and beverages such as berries, tea, coffee, red wine and dark soda or fruit juice
- Acidic foods and beverages such as citrus fruits, iced teas and sodas
- Smoking and chewing tobacco can cause severe discoloration of your teeth and should be avoided.
- Alcoholic beverages will hasten the demise of bonded restorations and should be enjoyed in moderation.

3. Are there things that might harm my new teeth besides eating?

Many oral habits can damage or dislodge dental restorations. You should not use your teeth for anything other than chewing food.

Avoid such habits as:

- Chewing pencils, toothpicks or ice cubes
- Biting your nails
- Opening bags, containers or bottles with your teeth
- Cutting fishing line or sewing thread with your teeth

4. Will my teeth be sensitive after my new restorations are placed?

Mild sensitivity is common following the permanent placement of your dental restorations. Your gum surrounding the new teeth, as well as your jaw muscles, may be tender for a few days. Your teeth themselves may be sensitive to cold, hot and chewing. Sensitivity to cold takes longest to resolve, but generally your teeth will feel normal again within a month. If sensitivity persists for more than 3 months you should notify your dental office.