

Learning when to replace dentures

There is no specifically agreed upon timeline according to denturists as to when a denture should be replaced.

There are instances where dentures have been replaced after one year or less, and on the opposite side of the spectrum, there are people who have worn the same dentures for 25 or more years. These ranges obviously are extremes. However, on average, denturists seem to be replacing dentures every five to seven years. There are a number of different things that need to be examined to determine whether it is time for a new set.

The main things a denturist will look for are the wear on the teeth, and the amount of bone loss since those dentures were placed.

When teeth are extracted, there is a fair amount of bone loss that takes place within the first few months. After this time, the bone loss slows but your tissues will always be changing. For some, the rate of loss is very rapid, while others maintain a fair amount of bone well into their 80s or even 90s. But regardless of the rate of loss, there will be a time when the changes in the mouth are too great and a new denture will need to be made to accommodate your new gums. There are some individuals who have worn the same dentures for years and years with a significant amount of bone loss without even realizing it. Over time, the person will create an over closed bite position which will cause a lot of strain on the jaw and pain. An over closed bite position also gives a sunken facial appearance which makes the individual appear much older than their chronological age.

Over time, the teeth will also wear and lose the vertical height that they once had. This will also give the face a more sunken and over closed appearance. Worn teeth also make it increasingly more difficult to eat. There comes a time when some individuals will no longer be chewing their foods, but rather mashing through their meals.

The acrylic on a denture also does not last forever. Although these materials are quite durable, they still deteriorate and warp slightly over time. Aging plastic loses its natural appearance and texture, and colouration fades, making dentures look quite artificial.

Deteriorating plastic also makes it easier for dentures to become excessively contaminated with micro-organisms. This contributes to mouth irritation and bad taste, and socially unacceptable odors will develop that no amount of denture cleaning will seem to eliminate.

Although some patients have a hard time letting go of their old dentures (like an old comfortable pair of shoes) eventually you do need a new pair. Replacing your dentures is a necessity, not a luxury. It is about taking care of yourself and maintaining good oral health.