

Ask The Dentists

Dear Dr. Winter, I can't seem to have a partial denture made that feels comfortable and fits. If I come to you how do I know I will be happy?

Dear Kathy, first of all, anything that has to take the place of the teeth you were born with are not ideal. You have a prosthesis that must be put into and taken out of your mouth every night. There are forces in your mouth such as your tongue, cheeks, lips, etc. that all move and can cause pressure on your partial. There is continued bone loss over time when you lose your teeth that makes each partial you have made less stable because there is less bone to stabilize it.

Now the pressure on your teeth is uncomfortable and some partials engage the teeth with flexible clasps like a Valplast or Flexite partials and others have metal based clasps that are more rigid. The flexible partials don't sit on your teeth they sit on your gums, **which leads to accelerated bone loss from rubbing.** The more rigid metal based partial will sit on your teeth and preserve more bone but **they put more force on your teeth.** Each chewing cycle will push the metal into your teeth causing micro-flexion which can lead to tooth loosening, or fracture.

So neither partial is ideal! How about an implant supported partial where you don't need to clasp your teeth at all and can rely on implants to take the stresses of chewing?

Was this treatment ever discussed with you? The sooner you have implants, the faster you stop bone loss!! **Let me repeat that: THE SOONER YOU GET IMPLANTS, THE FASTER YOU STOP BONE LOSS!** So you should always look to replace what was lost as opposed to putting a bandaid on the situation which is what a partial is.

You may then say, "Dr. Winter implants are too expensive!" Well, considering the cost of bone loss, the added surgeries of trying to regain bone to place implants, they are really reasonable when you think about it. **Implants can be done one or two per year if that is all your budget allows and that way over time you may have enough implants to throw away your partial altogether and get permanent teeth!**

So to answer your question, we make fantastic partials. We are not done until you are comfortable. That is how we



Drs. Richard and Bruce Winter

work with dentures, partials, and bridges, we are not done until you are happy. That being said, partial dentures are temporary prostheses that need to be remade and or relined every 3-5 years! Beyond that the teeth will wear, the acrylic will chip, the bone will resorb, so they need to be kept in a pristine condition so that they do not cause harm to your remaining teeth and bone. Partial dentures are a compromise and need to be discussed with our patients that way. They are never an ideal solution to missing teeth.

Please see our articles at www.hamptondentalassociates.com for examples of implant based dentures, partials and bridges and read about the techniques we use to create great smiles and healthy chewing. Please watch our video on Upgradeable Dentistry and call 414-464-9021 today to schedule your visit.

Lastly, we are blessed to have again been selected for M Magazine's TOP DENTISTS AWARDS. Both Dr. Bruce and Dr. Richard are humbled by this award as we continue to provide dentistry to Milwaukee, continuing a tradition of excellence started by our Grandfather and Father 94 years ago!

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