

## Ask The Dentist- April 2013

Dear Dr. Winter, I am a new (complete) denture wearer. How can I determine what proper fitting dentures "should" look, fit and feel like? Neither my top, nor bottom fit. My top denture doesn't seem to go up far enough has about 1/4" gap where EVERYTHING (including saliva) goes under my denture(s) regardless of the denture adhesive I use. They don't line-up, my smile is "lop-sided" and I can't eat. Should my top denture go all the way up to the top/have a gap or be flush? Thanks!

Dear Kathy, I am sorry you are having problems. The easiest way to answer your question is to say I have to look at your dentures to evaluate the size of the peripheries, the seal in the palatal area and the retention of the new denture. Dentures should fit intimately to the palate. They should not have a gap that is felt with the tongue. If the denture is extended too far to the back of your mouth it is possible to feel a gap if your soft palate is covered as your soft palate moves during speech and swallowing. If the top denture doesn't seem to go up high enough the dentist needs to evaluate it and make sure there is a good fit and it has been trimmed properly to insure the denture is fully seated. If it is not all the way down, a proper adjustment could allow it to seat further. In the absence of good fit the denture may need to be relined where a new impression is taken in the denture and it is sent to the lab to have additional acrylic added to the inside of the denture. If you can't eat the dentures are not done. I always tell patients the day they take my dentures home they are only half done! The final adjustments to your fit and bite will help insure they are optimal. If they don't line up--and your smile is lop-sided you need to address this with your dentist so they can remedy the situation. If the dentist did one or more try-in visits to check smile display, alignment, bite then they should look great now. Please ask your dentist to address these items until you are satisfied. If not seek a second opinion.

Dear Dr. Winter, I had porcelain crowns done 4 years ago and I am just not happy. There is now a space between the teeth and they appear to be too yellow what should I do? Also a space opened up and I didn't wear the retainer I was given with the crowns.

Well, presumably you approved them before they were cemented. Patients are always told that the color of crowns will not change so they must approve the shape and appearance prior to allowing them to be cemented. It is much easier to have a lab change the color of the crowns before they are cemented then to go through the arduous task of cutting them off, re-temporizing the teeth, making a new impression and redoing the entire process. Not to mention that cutting crowns off of teeth is not a benign process and can lead to further trauma to the underlying tooth structure and potentially causing the nerves to die resulting in one or more root canals. Not wearing a mouthguard in situations where patients clench their teeth or grind

their teeth can allow teeth to move as well so not wearing your mouthguard can really change your bite in certain situations.

I would speak to your dentist and see what you can do to rectify the situation.

Dentists always want their patients to leave happy!

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All the best,

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