

Flexible dentures: Smile for sorrow faces

Sir,

Flexible partial dentures are comfortable, beautiful, and an affordable choice in this modern era. It was long thought that removable partial dentures had to be rigid to be effective. The innovation of the flexible partial dentures allows the restoration to adapt to the constant movement and flexibility in the mouth. This is the underlying thinking behind the innovative flexible, removable partial denture. The flexibility, combined with strength and lightweight, provides total comfort and great looks!

The fabrication is relatively simple because the natural teeth don't need to be altered in any way. The flexible partial denture is virtually invisible because there are no metallic extensions (clasps) and the material itself blends with the tissue in the mouth so that the only thing that shows is the beautiful smile. When considering a removable partial denture, many people find the flexible partial to be the most comfortable option.^[1] While the cost is often higher than a partial denture made conventionally, the results of the flexible partial are dazzling, and patient satisfaction is very high and that gives confidence while talking, eating, and most importantly: Smiling!

Flexible denture base material is nylon-based thermoplastic resin. They have shown several advantages over the traditional rigid acrylic denture bases. The translucency of the material picks up underlying tissue tones, making it almost impossible to detect in the mouth. No additional metallic extensions are visible on tooth surfaces (when used; manufactured in transparent material), improving looks.^[2] Flexible denture material is so strong that it can be made very thin, which makes it comfortable to wear and esthetically pleasing. As the flexible dentures are fabricated using advanced and improved technique, they exhibit better accuracy compared to conventional techniques. Being flexible, the denture adapts well in the undesired bony areas. The amount of adjustment required at time of denture insertion is greatly reduced. Also, this reduces post-insertion complaints of denture-induced trauma (ulceration). Absolute bioadaptability is because the material is free of harmful chemicals (monomer) and metal, these being the principle causes of allergic reactions in conventional denture materials.

Temporary dentures are recommended by dentists during therapeutic episodes. After surgical reconstruction of the upper jaw, there is a need to accommodate the patient during the period between surgery and the fabrication of a final dental appliance. For this purpose, a flexible

denture offers a great solution that allows the patient to recommence daily activities. Midline fracture of complete dentures has been reported to be the second most common type of fracture in denture prosthesis. Flexible denture material has been reported to have therapeutic advantage in overcoming midline denture fractures. Flexible dentures form an excellent alternative to traditional hard fitting denture.^[3,4] Material being soft and strong can be made thinner and are light in weight compared to conventional dentures that promotes better adaptation of the tongue and cheek to the denture base. These dentures absorb small amounts of water to make the denture more soft tissue compatible. Due to their ability of excellent mouldability, light weight to density ratio and high thermal strength, flexible dentures have been proven as an excellent treatment option for complete and partial edentulism. However, careful case selection and clinical judgment is required to use flexible dentures in appropriate situations in order to obtain a successful treatment outcome.

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