

Too Embarrassed To Eat Your Favorite Foods With Your Favorite People?



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Regain the Pleasure of Eating with Implant-Supported Dentures by Dr. Lisa Marie Samaha

If you turn down invitations to share meals with friends and family for fear your dentures will slip, keep reading. Find out how you say goodbye to anxiety and discomfort, regain the pleasure of eating and say hello to better health with implant-supported dentures from dentist Dr. Lisa Marie Samaha of Port Warwick Dental Arts in Newport News.

For many people, wearing dentures is nearly impossible, or challenging, at the very least. Samaha says, "The jawbone that usually holds the teeth begins to deteriorate once the teeth are removed. The bone can dissolve to the point where it can't hold dentures in place anymore and sore spots often develop," she says.

Social Anxiety

Poorly fitted or loose dentures can cause many denture-wearers to be socially isolated. They rarely, if ever, go out to dinner. Eating their favorite foods is a thing of the past, and the blender becomes front and center in the kitchen, Samaha says. "These individuals worry their upper teeth will fall down and their lower teeth will float up," she says. "It's horribly embarrassing. Implant dentures are always securely fitted, allowing for renewed confidence, renewed health and a renewed social life."

"There are other reasons why eating isn't fun for many who wear dentures," Samaha says. "The thick, hard plastic palate of upper dentures keeps the denture-wearer from experiencing the texture and temperature of different foods, as well. Sometimes, foods will even stick to the plastic palate."

Discomfort, Infections and Other Health Problems

When the teeth are worn down and dentures are loose, the constant movement of the denture can scratch gum tissue, creating ulcers, Samaha says. Sometimes

the sores are extremely painful and the dentures end up in the nightstand drawer. Other times, the individual doesn't even know the sores are present because they don't hurt. Either way, there is danger in ill-fitting dentures. "Constant irritation of the soft oral tissues can cause sores that can become cancerous," she says. People with dentures are also very susceptible to fungal infections on the denture and on the tissue. The majority of denture-wearers who are infected are completely unaware they have a problem. And these infections are impossible to get rid of without professional attention," Samaha says. So for all these reasons, it's important for denture-wearing patients to see a dentist at least once a year. However, when implants or natural teeth are present, maintenance appointments are required two to four times a year.

Ill-fitting dentures also lead to poor eating habits. "People who can't chew properly are more likely to choose high carbohydrate, softer foods," Samaha says. "Fresh, raw fruits and vegetables are typically lost from the diet. That can lead to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, gastrointestinal problems and other degenerative diseases. Many denture wearers already suffer from such illnesses, only making health issues all the more challenging to stabilize."

Several Options for Help

Today's customized dentures can be paired with implants, to securely lock them in place. "Options without a palate are excellent for patients who have sensitive gag reflexes," Samaha says.

Often, highly affordable mini-implants can be gently placed in one short appointment, with the denture snapped into place before the patient even leaves the office.

• "Either way, a patient can get dentures that snap onto as few as two to four implants," Samaha says. This is the first and most conservative option.

• "The next option to replacing missing teeth is a more permanent style denture, with no palate and minimal plastic, cemented onto several implants," Samaha says. The dentist can periodically remove these dentures for cleaning—otherwise, they do not come in and out and they are cleaned much like natural teeth."

• A third option that mimics natural teeth in size and shape, includes more implants with porcelain crowns and/or bridges cemented onto them. "No denture or plastic of any kind is necessary in this case," Samaha says.

Such options are only available in offices specially trained in implant dentistry. No matter which option is chosen, the result can be stunning and natural in the hands of the skilled dentist.

Replace Blender with the Grill

With better fitting, more permanent dentures, you can put up the blender — and fire up the grill!

Dr. Lisa Marie Samaha of Port Warwick Dental Arts offers a free consultation (usually \$120) so you can see what option might work best for you.



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