



clifton
— DENTAL STUDIO —



ARE YOU A DENTURE VICTIM?

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Are you a denture victim?



British Academy of
Cosmetic Dentistry
ACCREDITED MEMBER

ARE YOU A DENTURE VICTIM?

Dear prospective guest,

Thank you for requesting my free consumer awareness guide, "Are You a Denture Victim?"

I have produced this guide following feedback from many prospective patients just like you, people who have found themselves in the position of having to consider tooth replacement with complete or partial removable dentures, or those that already possess dentures but feel self-conscious and embarrassed, suffer with pain, or no longer enjoy eating.

There are a number of familiar questions and legitimate concerns that everyone has, but also a number of issues that everyone should be aware of and are not. This guide attempts to address all those issues which everyone should be aware of and help you make a decision regarding how best to make the move from your failing natural teeth to "False Teeth".

Whether you have just received the news that you should consider removable dentures, or whether this is a treatment you have been considering for some time, I guarantee you will find this guide of great use.

Clifton Dental Studio consists of a small dedicated team committed to clinical excellence and great customer service. If you require any further information or assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us and we will do our very best to help in any way possible.

Warm regards,



Dr Neil Gerrard, BDS, RDT (GDC No: 76257)

Dentist and published author



Dr Neil Gerrard leads a small dedicated multi-award winning team committed to clinical excellence and exceptional customer service.

As an author he has published “How to choose your Perfect Dentist”. A book to help anyone one find their perfect dentist for them.

Dr Neil Gerrard is the only dentist in the South West and one of only 16 dentists nationally to have achieved accreditation status with the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD). BACD accreditation recognises the advanced level and skill required to create the very best smiles possible. For further information visit www.bacd.com.

Dr. Neil Gerrard is a Dental Phobia Certified dentist.

Neil’s area of special interest is in advanced cosmetic dentistry, smile rejuvenation and complex smile reconstruction with dental implants. He achieved a Master’s degree level in Dental Implantology in 2015 (MSc Bris) after working with dental implants as a dentist and technician for over 25 years. His advanced training in Smile Design has also enabled him to become a member of many top dental institutions. To maintain his position as one of the countries leading cosmetic dentists Neil completes over one hundred hours of advanced training every year in the fields of cosmetic and implant dentistry.

In addition to his advanced training as a cosmetic dentist Neil is dual qualified as a cosmetic dental technician. These are the highly skilled individuals responsible for producing the very best custom made veneers and crowns used by cosmetic dentists to enhance their patients smiles. Possessing this extensive understanding of the complete smile enhancement process enables Neil to enhance your smile to the highest possible standards.

As an accredited member and examiner with the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD) Neil helps to educate dentists, dental technicians and team members in the art and science of cosmetic dentistry.

Dr. Neil Gerrard is a member of:

- The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD) - Accredited member
- British Society of Occlusal Studies
- Registered Dental technician (RDT)
- Association of Dental Implantology
- The British Dental Association. (BDA)

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Are you a denture victim?

Do you wear dentures? Are problematic dentures affecting your self confidence or making life utterly miserable when eating? Or have you been told that you need dentures due to failing teeth?

If you have answered yes to any or all of these questions and wish to feel great about your smile and once again enjoy the pleasure of eating (no longer a denture victim), then you must read my free consumer awareness guide.

If you have ever worn dentures, or find yourself facing the prospect of needing dentures, then you will have undoubtedly experienced the embarrassment, stigma and even panic associated with them.

Wearing dentures or just the mere thought of wearing them can have a profound effect on one's self confidence. Many denture wearers feel that people know they have dentures when they eat, talk and smile. Many feel that their dentures don't look like natural teeth, while many are fearful their dentures will drop out in public due to poor fit and even find them embarrassing in their personal lives. And finally, many dentures wearers find life just miserable when attempting to chew, unable to look forward to and enjoy the foods they once did.

Nearly all of us know someone (normally our grandparents), who have worn dentures their entire lives, or have heard stories of people having their teeth removed for their 21st birthday and replaced with dentures. There is always someone who has worn dentures an entire life time with no perceivable problems at all. They have never felt self conscious about wearing dentures, never felt fearful or embarrassed about their lack of teeth and the need to wear a denture, and they brag constantly about their ability to eat anything they like.

Well think about it, if this were true, then why do these people bother to even wear them in the first place? Why wear a bit of plastic which moves constantly when you bite on something and stops you tasting your food properly? It's scientific fact that in to-days modern world you don't need teeth to eat and survive! The real reason these people wear dentures is for the same reason as you, the desire to feel "normal" and self confident.

It is important to understand, that just because a Grandparent or someone you may have known has worn dentures with minimal or no problems, does not mean you will experience the same. Most denture wearers find they must accept many compromises, not just with what they eat, but how they eat, how they talk, what they look like and most importantly how they feel.

If this all sounds familiar then you are not alone, hundreds of thousands of people just like you (denture victims), suffer in silence every day with some or all of these problems and it is for this reason I have produced this guide. I want to help people just like you feel normal, I want you to experience the benefits great dentures can offer. Just imagine, how would you feel if you never had to worry about what foods you could eat, never having to forgo the foods on the menu you really love when eating out at your favourite restaurant? And just imagine, how confident would you feel with great fitting, great looking dentures in your personal and professional life?

This consumer guide answers the critical questions you should ask your-self, whether you consider yourself to be a denture victim (an individual with constant denture problems), or if you are seeking dentures for the very first time.

The critical questions you must ask are:

1. How do I know if I need new dentures?
2. Will my new dentures be comfortable?
3. Can I eat normally when wearing a denture?
4. Should I consider dental implants?
5. Can I improve the fit of my dentures?
6. Should I need denture fixative and does it work?
7. Do I need to go without teeth when undertaking denture treatment?
8. How many teeth can a denture replace?
9. Why your natural teeth need to be healthy
10. How long should my new dentures last?
11. Should I see a regular dentist, a denture specialist or a clinical dental technician when considering new dentures?
12. Should I consider treatment abroad to save money?

1. How do I know if I need new dentures?

For some people they just like the idea of having new dentures from time to time, but for many denture wearers there are a number of very good reasons for seeking a new set of dentures. These reasons generally fall into three categories, which consist of:

1. Comfort and fit
2. The ability to eat and talk (function)
3. Appearance (denture aesthetics)

Comfort and fit

Many denture victims complain about the comfort and fit of their dentures. They find that they are never truly comfortable and always aware that they are wearing dentures. They find that their dentures constantly rub causing sore gums, move or drop out, while some find that their dentures make them gag or feel sick and nauseous all of the time.

If this is you, then a new set of dentures can help. Comfort is normally related to how well your dentures fit, the more accurately fitting the dentures the greater comfort you will experience. Accuracy of fit has a significant effect on all aspects of a denture and results from the ability of the dentist or clinical denture technician to take a highly accurate highly detailed impression (mould) of your gums then design your dentures for optimal fit. The better the impression, the better the fit!

(This is where choosing the right dentist or clinical denture technician is critical. You can read more about this later in this guide.)

Great fitting dentures help to reduce undesirable denture movement, thus reducing rubbing and soreness of the gums. They improve suction and retention of the dentures, so that they move less and have a reduced tendency to drop out. Accurately fitting dentures are no guarantee that undesirable movements will still occur, but they should significantly reduce them, often to a point at which they become manageable.

One thing that accurate fitting dentures cannot cure is an over active gag reflex. Whether a top or bottom denture, it is made to cover as much of the gum as possible, thus aid retention and suction. However, those possessing a very sensitive reflex to gagging will often require a reduction in the size of the dentures, thus resulting in a worst fit. If this is you and you have persevered without success, then you could try denture fixative, but the only real solution is dental implant retained dentures. Implants enable us to reduce a denture to any size comfortable without loss of retention and stability, providing life changing improvements for any denture victim.

The ability to talk and chew

When you received your very first set of dentures you were probably horrified by how difficult it was to talk and chew food normally. You were probably told to persevere with them as they would soon start to feel “normal”.

To a certain extent this is true, sudden or drastic changes take time to adapt to. The Human brain is very good at adapting to new sensations, such as new teeth, but it normally takes many months for this to happen.

However, for many denture victims, time is not a cure. They have persevered with their new dentures as instructed only to find that after many months and even years, that they still experience terrible difficulties when attempting to talk, chew food, or even both.

There can be a number of reasons for this, but for most it is a result of the position of the teeth when in the mouth (how low they hang down, how far forward they protrude, etc) and stability of the denture when in function – talking and chewing.

If this is you then new dentures can help.

An experienced denture dentist or clinical denture technician will be able to optimise the position of the teeth to provide the best balance between, eating and talking. Just like with comfort and fit however, there is a limit to what can be achieved.

1. How do I know if I need new dentures?

Appearance

The appearance of one's smile and teeth is a very subjective thing. What one person finds beautiful, another may find merely acceptable or down-right ugly.

If you wear dentures and find yourself unhappy with your smile then I bring good news. The appearance of your smile can be changed! For most denture victims a life changing improvement can be made by replacing your dentures. Remember, unlike natural teeth which may require extensive cosmetic dentistry, orthodontic treatments (braces), or even surgery, a new set of dentures can be created in a few weeks without you even having to go without teeth.

Within reason, it is possible to change the shape, colour and size of the teeth, while improving fit and comfort with new dentures. If you desire, you can possess the perfect "Hollywood" smile, or a younger appearing smile (which literally makes you look five to ten years younger). At the other extreme, we can make your teeth appear yellow, crooked and worn for a "how nature intended look", and even add silver fillings. For most people though, something in between is most desirable.

Dentures do not only consist of teeth, but also coloured plastic designed to reproduce the appearance of pink gum tissue. Did you know that people possess different coloured gums in just the same way they possess different coloured skin!

Whether you are White, Black or Asian, your gums possess varying degrees of pigment (colour). If you are Black or Asian you will generally possess darker coloured gums than if you are white. Not only does gum colour differ from one individual to another (whether white, Black or Asian) it can vary significantly within different regions of the mouth. So, wearing dentures with gums made of a one size fits all colour pink, is a sure way to make you look like you are wearing dentures.

It is however important to understand that denture aesthetics must always be balanced against the function of the dentures, so for some it may not be possible to provide great looking dentures without compromising the stability and retention so much, that they are impossible to eat or talk with.

Great fitting cosmetic dentures can offer many benefits, so if you feel you wish to improve any of the issues discussed, please contact Clifton Dental Studio or visit www.CliftonSmiles.com.

2. Will my new dentures be comfortable?

With a new set of quality cosmetic dentures you are likely to experience improvements in the way they fit, additional comfort when eating, fewer problems when talking, and improvements in both your appearance and confidence when smiling.

Unfortunately though, while most people will see some level of improvement we as dentists can never say exactly how much. The fit and comfort of dentures not only depends on their quality when created (how well they were made to fit), but is also highly dependent on the existing shape of your gums/jawbone and your ability to adapt to changes in your mouth.

If you aren't aware, your ability to adapt to change, any change, decreases significantly with age. The older you are the more difficult change becomes. Those receiving dentures for the first time at the age of 20, 30 or even 40 years of age will find the transition much easier than someone receiving dentures for the very first time at the age of 60, 70 or even 80 years of age.

Jaw bone shape and gum thickness can influence the fit and feel of complete and partial dentures considerably. Significant shrinkage of the jaw bones (known as resorption) and/or thin gum tissues (thin skin), can leave little for dentures to grip to and that which is left can be very tender as the gum tissue is just not tough enough to cope.

If you are an individual who struggles to adapt to change, possesses poor jawbone or thin gum tissue, then a new set of dentures may make little difference, but before decide that you are beyond help you should seek expert advice, as you may find high quality cosmetic dentures will resolve some if not all of your problems.

If determined that new dentures are not the solution for you, then don't despair, as the use of dental implants for severe bone loss and soft lining materials for thin gum tissue can offer a real solution to all your denture problems.

3. Can I eat normally when wearing a denture?

It is scientific fact that you do not need teeth to live. So why do we want replacement teeth when they fail? For some, it is only about their appearance and their smile, but for many it is also about quality of life and pleasure.

We want to enjoy eating our food and that normally means the ability to chew a broad range of foods from crunchy vegetables to a tender steak and dentures can help us do that.

Wearing dentures can help us enjoy that simple pleasure, but they can also make us miserable if they prevent us chewing normally. Dentists typically find that the more teeth a denture replaces the more it moves when eating and the less enjoyment our patients experience. A denture may move so much that it physically prevents normal chewing.

As a general rule small partial to medium dentures will normally help chewing as there are enough natural teeth to grip onto, while complete dentures tend to prevent normal chewing as they constantly move.

For those that have worn dentures for many years, normally from a relatively young age, chewing is not a problem (our grandparents who had their teeth removed for their 21st birthday), they have learnt to adapt.

However, most people find themselves facing the decision to wear dentures later in life when their ability to adapt is much reduced.

So, if you find yourself in the position of replacing only a small number of teeth, then you are highly likely to continue chewing normally. If you face the loss of all your teeth, then it is likely that you will notice a significant reduction in your ability to chew.

As discussed a number of times throughout this guide do not despair if new dentures don't offer you the results you desire, as dental implants will nearly always be a suitable solution to the problems you experience.

4. Should I consider dental implants?

Do you find yourself embarrassed when smiling or eating in public, or do you avoid social occasions altogether because of ill-fitting or moving dentures?

If you have answered yes, then you will likely benefit from dental implants.

Dental implants can be used to restore new fixed teeth, or aid the stability of a denture, so that it no longer moves or drops out when smiling, talking and eating.

Scientific research has proven that quality of life dramatically improves when a loose lower denture is fixed to just two dental implants. So if you are struggling to cope with your dentures, feel embarrassed all of the time, or simply can't eat, then dental implants may be the solution to your problems.

For additional information regarding dental implant treatments please request a copy of my free consumer awareness guide "16 Critical Facts About Dental Implant Treatment", or visit my website www.CliftonSmiles.com. Additional impartial information is also available from the Association of Dental Implantology (ADI) at www.adi.org.uk.

5. Can I improve the fit of my dentures?

If you have worn dentures for a number of years and now find they don't fit as well as they once did, then it is often possible to improve the fit by relining the denture.

As time passes the jaw bone supporting a denture shrinks and changes shape, thus resulting in once perfectly fitting dentures becoming loose. For some this takes decades, for most, this is a slow process which is detectable every few years. This problem can often be managed by relining the denture, adding an additional thin layer of pink plastic to the surface that fits against the gums. Filling the gap created by shrinkage of the gums will often result in improved suction and stability, thus the general fit and feel of the denture.

If you have recently started wearing dentures and just can't manage with them, or have worn dentures that have never fitted well, then it is likely that you require the experience of a dentist with a special interest in dentures, or a clinical denture technician to create new dentures with optimal fit. While for some this may make little difference (due to excessive gum shrinkage over time, or gums which are just the wrong shape), for others, it may be the difference between constant misery or pleasure when eating and great self confidence when smiling.

Scientific research shows that the minimal standard of care for individuals wearing complete upper and lower dentures is the placement of two dental implants (minimum) in the lower jaw to secure a lower denture. The lower denture is typically the most problematic as it has to fight with a moving tongue when talking and eating, while possessing no suction to hold it in position like an upper denture.

If you are experiencing problems with existing dentures, or have tried a number of different dentures with little improvement, then dental implants are probably the answer you are looking for. Again, scientific research confirms that dental implants transform the entire denture experience, with the vast majority of denture wearers who have received dental implants stating that they have seen significant improvement in the way their dentures fit and thus the quality of their lives.

So, to summarise; it is possible to improve the fit of dentures, either altering an existing denture to fit better, creating new dentures that fit as accurately as possible, or finally, the gold standard of care, the use of dental implants to anchor dentures securely when chewing.

For additional information regarding dental implant treatments please request a copy of my free consumer awareness guide "16 Critical Facts About Dental Implant Treatment", or visit my website www.CliftonSmiles.com. Additional impartial information is also available from the Association of Dental Implantology (ADI) at www.adi.org.uk.

6. Should I need denture fixative and does it work?

Denture fixative or adhesive has been available for many years and is something which can be of help in certain situations. Some denture wearers swear by it, while others find it unpleasant to use or ineffective.

Denture fixative works best when used with a top denture. Gravity causes a poor fitting or poorly made top denture to drop in the mouth when you are not pushing it up with the tongue or when biting on it. When it comes to the bottom denture, denture fixative offers fewer benefits. The bottom denture is already pulled in to position by gravity down onto the gums, so it does not drop like a top denture. However, the bottom denture has a tendency to be pushed up and out by the tongue and cheeks when eating and talking, while it also sits on a much smaller area of gum meaning there is less area for the denture fixative to stick to.

If you possess accurately fitting dentures, then as a general rule denture fixative will make little or no difference to the stability of the dentures when talking and most importantly when eating.

Interestingly! I was watching TV recently and came across an advert which caught my attention. I have little time to watch TV and when I do I tend to skip through the adverts as much as possible (like we all do), however this particular advert caught my eye. It was advertising a dental product, in particular denture fixative/adhesive.

Now this was canny marketing, instead of claiming to cure all your denture problems by sticking your denture in place with just an application of "goo", they changed tact, to promoting the benefits of fixative to prevent food debris leaking under your denture when chewing.

If you possess accurate fitting dentures, then yes dental fixative can help create a seal which reduces food debris leaking under the denture when eating, but again, if your dentures fit well then this may provide little or no improvement.

Where denture fixative can be of great use, is when you are about to lose teeth and replace them with a denture, or if you possess a very stable partial denture but are about to lose a tooth which helps hold the denture secure. Denture fixative may help you get used to new or modified dentures by sticking the denture to the gums, until the gums have settled and your new or existing denture has been made to fit the new shape.

There will always be individual patients that we as dentists are just unable to create great fitting dentures for, either their gums and jaw bones are not the right shape and have literally shrunk away to nothing, or find they cannot manage the natural movement of dentures when talking and eating. If this is you, then denture fixative can be of help and make dentures just that little bit more tolerable.

Finally, if you wear dentures and have tried everything to improve the fit and comfort to no avail, possessing multiple sets of dentures in an attempt to find teeth you can wear with confidence and comfort, then you should consider dental implants. Scientific research shows that the use of just two dental implants in the bottom jaw to clip the denture to, has an incredible affect on the self confidence and quality of a denture victim's life.

7. Do I need to go without teeth when undertaking denture treatment?

For most people one of their biggest fears is the need to go without teeth. Whether you already wear dentures or are about to start wearing dentures, I can confidently predict that in most cases you will not be required to go without teeth.

If you are an existing denture wearer you will have some experience of the denture creation process already. As part of this process you will normally be required to visit a dentist over a number of weeks to record the shape of your mouth with impressions, check you are able to talk and bite correctly and finally, confirm that your new smile is exactly how you would like it to look. In most instances your dentist will not need to keep or modify your existing denture in any way, so you can attend happy in the knowledge that you will leave the same way you came in.

For those moving from failing teeth to dentures (needing teeth removed before a denture can be fitted), a similar process is followed. As much as possible the denture is tried in and confirmed as acceptable before your teeth are removed. (There is a limit to this though as your natural teeth are still like to be in the way). Creation of the denture is then completed ready to give you the same day your teeth are removed. You walk into the dentist with teeth, you walk out of the dentist with teeth.

Only if your teeth are so rotten or your gums so diseased and unhealthy may your dentist need to remove your teeth and allow everything to heal for a number of weeks before creating your denture. With the development of more advanced dental implant treatments it is now possible to remove your teeth and replace them with fixed teeth on dental implants straight away in the same day.

8. How many teeth can a denture replace?

A denture can be created to replace any number of missing teeth, from just a single tooth to all of your teeth.

Dentures which replace all the teeth in a single jaw are known as full or complete dentures. Dentures created to replace only some teeth in a single jaw are known as partial dentures.

Both complete and partial dentures can be created in acrylic (plastic) only, or incorporate a metal frame for strength and durability (known as a chrome-cobalt denture). The metal frame is designed to be invisible when smiling and to improve the fit and feel of a denture as it can be made much thinner than plastic.

Critically, a metal framed denture will often promote better gum health as it covers a much smaller area of the mouth when compared to acrylic only. This will help you maintain your remaining teeth and reduce the risk of you requiring further tooth removal.

9. Why your natural teeth need to be healthy

If you wear partial dentures already or you are being forced to consider them for the very first time, then it is important to understand the role that your remaining natural teeth will play.

Partial dentures are designed to replace a number of missing teeth, from just a single tooth to nearly all of your teeth. Where complete or full dentures rely on suction and your adaptation to keep them from falling out, partial dentures utilise your remaining teeth as anchors to help hold them in position. As you can appreciate, the more teeth you have remaining the more there is for your partial denture to grab on to. More teeth equals better tighter fitting dentures, fewer teeth equals poorer looser fitting dentures.

Your aim should therefore be to hang on to as many naturally health teeth as possible, as this will ultimately affect the way your dentures fit, feel and look. This means gold medal standard tooth brushing and dental hygiene, with regular trips to your dentist to help maintain your teeth and smile.

10. How long should my new dentures last?

As a denture wearer you will need to accept that at some point your denture or dentures will wear out and require replacement, either physical wear of the plastic, or find they no longer fit well due to changes in your mouth, for example; shrinkage of the gums.

How quickly they wear depends on many factors, including the shape of your jaw bone, how many teeth you have missing, how heavy you chew on them, the types of food you eat and the way you look after them.

Dentures are normally created in acrylic (a plastic), which is moulded into the exact shape of your mouth for best fit and comfort. However, this plastic possesses a tendency to wear over time, especially if you grind your teeth or chew vary abrasive foods.

If you wear a partial denture (meaning you still possess some of your own teeth), you may find that the plastic needs to be very thin around your natural teeth resulting in the plastic breaking over time. To prevent this it is possible to strengthen partial dentures and even complete dentures with a chrome metal strengthener, however over time the plastic teeth will still continue to wear.

It is possible to eliminate wear of the teeth completely by creating the denture with porcelain ceramic teeth. These teeth can last for many years, but they still require a plastic pink gum coloured base to hold them in position. Although porcelain teeth wear very little, the pink gum coloured plastic will require renewal in time. Now-days, porcelain teeth are rarely used as they come with their own compromises, for example; they can make a clacking sound when you chew, or the pink plastic can discolour at the point the porcelain joins the plastic, resulting in stained discoloured gums (dirty looking teeth).

Finally, if wearing dentures supported by dental implants, whether completely fixed (non removable), or to help stabilise a removable denture, you should expect them to wear at an increased rate and require an upgrade more frequently. The reason for this is that dental implants help secure dentures so securely, that you are able to chew with them like real teeth, thus placing additional wear on the plastic.

Although all of these variables make it difficult to say how long a denture will last, on average you can expect to replace your denture/dentures every five to seven years. If held in place with implants, then every three to five years.

11. Should I see a regular dentist, a denture specialist or a clinical dental technician when considering new dentures?

All dentists undertake training in the provision of dentures. The vast majority of registered dentists in the UK, including myself, are considered to be General Dental Practitioners (GDPs) holding the qualification of BDS (Bachelor of Dental Science) or the equivalent.

This qualification entitles a dentist to register with the GDC (General Dental Council) and perform all those treatments considered to be part of general dental practice, like the provision of dentures and removal of teeth. This qualification also entitles general dentists to offer treatments a registered dental specialist can offer so long as they have received appropriate training and are competent to do so, including the provision of cosmetic dentures and dental implants.

Clinical Dental Technicians

Until a few years ago if you were seeking a new set of dentures as a patient, then it was only possible to legally obtain a new set of dentures from a registered qualified dentist. Traditionally only dentists were legally trained to provide the general public with new dentures or change or alter an existing set of dentures.

As such, your choices were therefore limited. You could seek new dentures from a general dentist, a dentist with a special interest in providing dentures, or a dentist with advanced qualifications in the provision of dentures - officially called a dental specialist (such as a Prosthodontist, or a Specialist Restorative Dentist).

In 2008 however, it became legal for a second group of dental care professionals known as clinical dental technicians to create and supply new dentures to the general public.

Clinical dental technicians are the highly skilled individuals who create the custom-made porcelain veneers, crowns, and dentures used by cosmetic, implant, and general dentists to treat their patients.

However, they have also undertaken additional training (in a similar fashion to a dental therapist) to provide treatment directly to a patient as part of the dental team. In particular, clinical dental technicians are qualified to create and provide removable dentures directly to patients.

As the majority of clinical dental technicians work within their own practices, they are also qualified to recognise a range of dental diseases, including oral cancer and tooth decay, so that they may inform and refer patients to a registered dentist for appropriate care and treatment as required.

As a qualified dentist also holding advanced qualifications as a dental technician, I can confidently recommend treatment with a clinical dental technician to anyone seeking new or improved dentures. Not only do they understand how to deal with any dentures problems you may be experiencing, they will also be responsible for creating your new dentures from start to finish.

12. Should I consider treatment abroad to save money?

The idea of saving hundreds or even thousands of pounds combining a trip to the dentist while enjoying a holiday abroad can sound very appealing, and I am sure you have come across a number of adverts on the web and in health magazines advertising such low cost dental implant and denture treatments abroad. However, there are a number of vital issues you must consider before jetting off for that “bargain” new set of dentures and maybe that half price dental implant or two.

Issues of greatest concern relate to the quality of care you will receive, the increase risk of complications associated with flying after surgery if required, the availability and standard of after-care on your return to the UK, what happens if things do go wrong, and are you able to make a complaint or seek recourse if the worst should happen.

Many patients seeking care abroad have found it to be a satisfactory experience, but many have found themselves returning to the UK with considerable problems from complications or inappropriate care. To make matters worse, they have then required additional treatment at considerable financial costs to fix their problems back in the UK.

If considering treatment abroad do not choose on price alone, try to always make a decision based on the dentists experience, previous successes and results of other patients he has treated.

As a dentist, my advice would always be to stay at home for treatment, even for dentures! However, if you are determined to undertake treatment abroad you should always choose a country where training and standards of care are accepted as equivalent or equal to that offered in the UK.

You should also ask these following questions:

1. Who will be completing your treatment, and what qualifications does he or she hold?
2. Is the dentist regulated by a professional body, and if so, is compulsory registration required?
3. Will you be able to communicate in English, and if not, will an interpreter be supplied?
4. What are the success rates of treatment and the likelihood of complications?
5. What level of aftercare service is available, and is care available on return to the UK?
6. What happens if complications do arise? Who is responsible for the cost of flights, travel, and hotel arrangements, including any remedial work required in the UK upon your return?
7. Does the dentist possess indemnity cover or malpractice insurance to protect patients?
8. Does the dentist possess a robust complaints procedure, and if so, is a copy available?
9. Who do you go to for advice following treatment?

You can find out more about undertaking dental treatments abroad in my book “There is No Perfect Dentist”. You will also find a list of health regulators and professional bodies in other countries by visiting www.HealthRegulation.org