

Does your lower denture wobble?

One of the true enjoyments many of us have in life as we age is eating. We have more time to cook or we just look forward to going out to eat. But some of us enjoy eating more than others. Why? For many, they have a lower denture that wobbles. And no matter what they do, that lower denture just doesn't feel right.

It's a problem for denture wearers and the question usually goes like this: Why does my upper denture feel secure but my lower denture doesn't?

The answer is in your anatomy. You have a palate on the upper, a large area where your denture rests. And because of that, the upper denture fits like a suction cup. The lower doesn't work that way, because your tongue is in the way. The lower denture just doesn't stand a chance with a tongue whose muscles move when we talk, when we swallow, and when we eat.

In previous columns, I've talked about dental implants to replace an entire arch (upper or lower) of teeth with teeth that are fixed in place. They are great, but may not be affordable for some. However, there is a solution that may do just enough to make you comfortable and start enjoying your food again. It's the two-implant "snap."

A two-implant snap works this way. Two implants are placed into the front part of your lower jaw, spaced about an inch apart. Included in those implants are receptacles that hold a snap, the same kind of snap that holds a jacket together, the same kind of snap that holds an infant's clothes together. The other part of the snap is then attached to the inside of the denture. So instead of the denture floating up and down, it now snaps into place. Two snaps are the minimum. A good candidate for the two-implant snap has some remaining lower ridge and has enough room in the existing denture to hold the snap. If you want additional snaps in the back for even more stability, they can be placed at the same time or added later on.

The surgery for the two-implant snap is minimal, sometimes not even requiring an incision. And it won't break the bank, costing \$5-7000 depending on the quality of the lower ridge and the usability of the existing denture.

Our bodies thrive when we eat the correct foods. If you are changing your food choices because your dentures just don't do the job, think "snap."

Lee N. Sheldon, DMD