Denture maintenance

A decision guide for clinical dental technicians

Existing full and partial dentures, including dentures opposing natural teeth

1 ASSESS

Assess the patient, denture and proposed work, including soft tissues, restorations, remaining and opposing teeth, and suitability for impressions. Consider the patient's needs, benefits, risks and the effects of delaying or withholding treatment. Use sufficient information for the decision.

2 DECIDE

Can this work safely and appropriately proceed within your competence, without prior dental input or referral, and without materially changing the denture's design or intended purpose?

YES → **Is other dental care or referral indicated?**

Other dental care, or refusal of it, does not automatically prevent independently appropriate maintenance.

- **YES** → **RECOMMEND / ARRANGE DENTAL CARE**

  Arrange care at the appropriate urgency. Explain the risks of declining care and record any refusal. Continue maintenance only if independently appropriate.

  → Agree care
- **NO** → Agree care

NO / UNSURE → **CLARIFY AND RISK ASSESS**

Obtain relevant information. Review any red flags and ask:

Clinical concerns: Are there suspicious lesions, loose crowns or mobile teeth?
Impression safety: Are the surrounding and opposing teeth suitable for taking and removing an impression?
Managing risk: Refer to the GDC's Scope of Practice guidance. What could go wrong, and can I manage the risks within my competence?
Next step: clarify the plan or adapt the work where appropriate.

Suspicious lesions: arrange appropriate assessment/referral, urgently if serious pathology is suspected.

After clarification or adaptation, can this work safely and appropriately proceed within your competence, without prior dental input or referral, and without materially changing the denture's design or intended purpose?

YES → **Is other dental care or referral indicated?** (as above)

NO / STILL UNSURE → **DEFER AFFECTED WORK**

Obtain necessary information or dental input, or arrange referral at the appropriate urgency.
Explain the next steps, when to seek help and the dental team's role in their care.
Explain the risks of declining further care; record the advice, understanding and any refusal.

→ Record and advise

3 AGREE, PROVIDE AND RECORD

If proceeding: explain options and risks, obtain consent and provide agreed care.
Every outcome: record findings, risk assessment, decision, reasons and any refusal. Arrange appropriate aftercare and communication with the dental team, with patient consent.
Do not treat without consent. Refusal of referral does not make unsafe work appropriate.