



ALASKA MEDICAID POLICY CLARIFICATION

Non-Coverage of Immediate Dentures, Wait Time for Denture Placement, and Service Limitations

Background

On June 3, 2016 Alaska Medicaid [announced](#) several Medicaid dental coverage changes effective July 1, 2016. The purpose of this follow-up notice is to provide additional information/clarification and respond to questions received regarding the elimination of coverage for immediate dentures, wait times for denture placement, and service limitations for dentures.

Policy

Immediate Dentures:

Alaska Medicaid no longer provides coverage for immediate dentures.

Wait Time for Denture Placement:

A provider must wait a **minimum of 8 weeks following extraction** of teeth before beginning the denture fabrication and placement process. This allows for healing to begin the process for fabrication and placement. The 8-week minimum time period does not substitute for the clinician's judgement on when adequate hard and soft tissue healing has occurred to undertake final soft tissue impressions to begin the process to provide an individual with a denture. It is recognized that individuals with a history of periodontal disease or who have had extensive surgery of the alveolar ridge may have a longer healing time before initiation of the process to construct a denture can occur.

Service Limitations:

The department expects a well-constructed complete denture to serve an individual a minimum of five years.

The **replacement** of complete or partial dentures is limited to

- once per five year period, and **only** if medically necessary (i.e., replacement is not automatic at the 5-year mark)
- three times in a lifetime for replacement of dentures within the same dental arch

The **replacement** of a partial denture with a complete denture is not covered within the first five years after payment for the partial denture.

Denture **adjustments** are limited to four times per calendar year.

Rebase and reline procedures are limited to once per three year period.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1	What is considered an immediate denture?
A1	The American Dental Association defines an immediate denture as a removable denture that is inserted on the same day that the remaining teeth are removed.
Q2	What dental codes are affected by the elimination of coverage for immediate dentures?
A2	D5130 and D5140 are no longer covered.
Q3	How do conventional dentures differ from immediate dentures?
A3	The American Dental Association defines conventional dentures as a removable denture that is <i>made and placed in your mouth after the remaining teeth are removed and after tissues have healed, which may take several months.</i>
Q4	What denture codes are covered by Alaska Medicaid?
A4	Complete dentures (all ages): D5110 and D5120 Partial dentures (age 21 and older): D5213, D5214 Partial dentures (under 21 years of age): D5211, D5212, D5213, D5214, D5225, D5226, D5281
Q5	If a patient requests immediate dentures, or if I think a patient requires immediate dentures, can I provide them and code them on the claim using a covered denture code so that the claim will be paid?
A5	No. A provider certifies the accuracy and validity of a claim upon endorsement of payment received from the Department of Health and Social Services, he or she certifies that the claim for which the payment is received is true and accurate. A claim that is submitted with information that does not represent the services rendered is considered a false claim.
Q6	Does the elimination of coverage for immediate dentures apply to adults? To children?
A6	Immediate dentures are no longer covered for any Medicaid recipient, regardless of age.
Q7	How much time must elapse between tooth extraction and fabrication of permanent dentures?
A7	Alaska Medicaid requires a minimum of 8 weeks following tooth extraction.
Q8	Why are immediate dentures no longer covered by Alaska Medicaid?
A8	The decision to discontinue coverage for immediate dentures was based on a number of factors, both clinical and fiscal. As healing occurs following the extraction of teeth, immediate dentures often need to be replaced or relined within months because they no longer fit properly.