

Retainers

Instruction Guide

ABOUT RETAINERS

Congratulations! You have now finished the active stage of your orthodontic treatment and are into the 'retention' period. Retainers are a vital part of your overall orthodontic treatment plan.

The first few months, after the braces are taken off, is the time where your teeth are at the highest risk of moving back. The main reason for tooth movement after the completion of orthodontic treatment is not wearing the retainers as instructed.

Retainers can come in the form of a bonded retainer (a small wire fixed behind the front six teeth) or in the form of a removable retainer (also known as a plate).



Two different types of removable retainers: A Hawley retainer (left) - made with plastic and metal wires and an Essix retainer (right) - made like a clear mouthguard.

WEARING RETAINERS

Your *removable* retainer must be worn FULL TIME for the first six months after your active orthodontic treatment is complete. For the following 2-3 years, you will need to wear your retainer at night time only.

After some time, you will gradually begin to reduce the wear of your retainers (every 2nd night, every 3rd night) until you reach a comfortable stage of one night a week, if possible.

Your *bonded retainer* can remain in place permanently, unless any cleaning or gum problems arise. Long term retainer wear is recommended, as clinical research shows that no matter how well teeth are straightened, they can continue to move throughout life.

BONDED RETAINERS

The bonded retainer is attached to each of your six front teeth (Fig 1), therefore making normal flossing difficult. Cleaning of the spaces between the teeth can be achieved by using an interdental brush or superfloss (Fig 2).



Fig 1



Fig 2

Your general dentist can also clean around your retainer at your dental check-up.

If any problems arise with your retainer, such as the glue becoming loose, please contact us as soon as possible to have it repaired. Waiting may lead to unwanted tooth movement.

REMOVABLE RETAINERS

The removable retainers must be worn **FULL TIME** with the exception of eating, playing some sports and brushing your teeth.

To clean your retainer, give it a brush with a toothbrush and toothpaste and rinse it under **cold water** (warm water may distort it). If you feel your retainer is in need of a more thorough clean, you may give it an occasional soak in a solution of equal parts white vinegar and cold water.



When your retainer is not in your mouth, please keep it in your retainer case. This will reduce the risk of it being lost or broken. If your retainer is lost or broken you MUST contact us ASAP to have another retainer made. This will incur an additional fee.

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