

# ORTHODONTIC RETAINERS



Congratulations on your new smile! First, we would like to thank you for your efforts in helping us create your great smile! We hope you feel proud to show others your new look. Here are some tips for keeping that smile looking good long term.

Your retainers are worn after the braces have been removed to hold the teeth in their new positions. They are only effective if you wear them regularly.



## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- The retainers may feel awkward at first and make speaking clearly a little difficult. Keep speaking and after a few days you will sound normal again.
- Retainers should be worn full time for 6 months.
- After the first 6 months, you will move to nighttime wear and then gradually decrease wear over time. We recommend nighttime wear for lifetime; or as long as you want to keep your teeth straight!
- Remove your retainers for eating and brushing. Only plain water can be used with retainers in the mouth.
- The retainer case is the best place to keep your retainers when you are eating. NEVER put them in a napkin or a pocket, otherwise it is easy to throw them away or break them accidentally.
- Remember that vacations and summer camps will change your normal routine – these are high risk times for losing or not wearing your retainer properly.
- Keep retainers away from pets – they love to chew on them!
- We will check the fit of your retainers at your retainer check appointment, so make sure you bring them with you.
- Do not wear your retainer during contact sports, instead wear a mouth guard.
- When inserting or removing your clear plastic retainers, lift slowly from back to front. Do not try to flip them out by holding only on the back of the retainer, as cracking in the front will then occur over time.
- Do not attempt to bite retainers into place with your teeth as this can crack the retainers. Do not chew on the retainers or flip them around in your mouth.

## CLEANING YOUR RETAINERS

- Brush your retainers twice a day when you are normally also brushing your teeth. A foaming hand soap or dish soap works the best for cleaning clear plastic retainers. “Whitening” toothpastes are often abrasive and can scratch the retainers.
- Never use hot or boiling water as it can warp or melt the retainers.
- In addition to brushing you can soak the retainers in a diluted mouthwash solution for about 10 minutes to keep them fresh. Watch for highly dyed solutions as colours may transfer.
- If you notice white mineral deposits on your retainers soak them for about 20 minutes in effervescent denture cleaners, or a ½ water and ½ vinegar solution, and then brush with toothpaste.

**If your retainer should break or become lost, please contact our office immediately.**

Additional costs may occur for repairs or replacements. Like eye glasses and other personal items, it is possible for retainers to wear out over time. Clear plastic retainers often last between 2-5 years but depend on grinding and clenching.

Replacing a worn-out retainer is a wise investment in protecting your smile and the long-term stability of your teeth. Please let us know right away if you misplace your retainers before your teeth move. If you bring your 3D printed model back into the office, we can replace the retainers quickly.



Retainer not fully seated