



Removable Retainer

CONGRATULATIONS! Today you begin an important phase of your orthodontic treatment... **Retention!** Over the past months your teeth have moved considerably and are not yet firmly in place. Your orthodontic retainer has been specifically designed to hold your teeth in their new positions until they are stable in their current position.

A **REMOVABLE RETAINER** is one of two types of appliances: **1) made of wire and plastic, or 2) made of plastic only.** It is fabricated on a precise model of your teeth that was made the day your impressions were taken.

The following is a general list of instructions concerning your retainer. However, special instructions may be given to you, depending on your individual needs, at future retention check appointments.

1. For the **FIRST 6 MONTHS** you must wear the retainer **24 hours/day** except when eating, brushing your teeth, or athletic events.
2. **AFTER THE FIRST 6 MONTHS**, you must wear your retainer **at night** when you sleep.
3. You may speak differently for the first few days while your tongue adapts to the smooth plastic of your retainer. This is normal. Keep talking, and you'll adapt so that you speak normally quicker.
4. **ALWAYS place your retainer in its plastic retainer case if your retainer is not in your mouth.** This will protect it from any accidental damage. If you misplace your retainer case, contact our office and we will provide you with a new one free of charge.
5. **NEVER** wrap your retainer in a tissue, napkin, or paper towel and place it on the side of your plate when eating. Someone will accidentally throw it away. Also, **NEVER** place your retainer in your shirt, coat, or pants pocket, because your retainer will break or become distorted under heavy pressure.
6. Keep your retainer away from pets, such as dogs and cats. They have been known to chew up and severely damage retainers left out in the open. Again, always keep it in your retainer case.
7. In order to clean it, **brush your retainer with a toothbrush and toothpaste every time you brush your teeth.** If not cleaned properly and often, a hard deposit will accumulate on the surface of your retainer, discolor the retainer, and/or irritate your gums. If your retainer becomes soiled or dirty, clean it with soap and water. Do not boil or heat your retainer, because heat will distort it.
8. Do not soak your retainer in mouthwash. Some mouthwashes contain alcohol, which will make the plastic of your retainer brittle and easier to break. Also, it can discolor your retainer.
9. When taking it out, **remove your retainer only as instructed.** Improper removal of your retainer over time can result in distortion of its shape or wires. This may prevent your retainer from fitting properly. Distortion of your retainer may allow your teeth and/or bite to shift.
10. If it breaks or if its fit changes, **do not try to repair or adjust your retainer on your own.** Improper adjustment of your retainer's plastic or wires may actually cause your teeth to move out of alignment. Contact our office as soon as possible so that we can inspect your retainer and adjust it properly.
11. **Remember:** Your first set of retainers has been paid for in your original treatment fee. However, **there will be additional charges to replace or repair lost or damaged retainers,** so please be careful!

Once again, congratulations! Let's keep your new smile looking great by following these instructions. Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns regarding the wear and care of your removable retainer.