

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WEARING RETAINERS

I am pleased to inform you that the orthodontic treatment has been completed and the results are excellent. At the completion of the active phase of orthodontic treatment, the period I call retention begins. To retain means to hold, and in this case, the teeth must be retained or held in their new positions. If we did not make an effort to retain the teeth following orthodontic movement, they would tend to move back to their original positions. This is called relapse period. In most instances I use plastic retainers that fit into the mouth. Retainers are also used to close the tiny band spaces that remain after the removal of the appliances. They may also hold spaces or provide replacements for missing teeth. The following rules should be observed so as to receive maximum benefit from the retainer:

1. Wear the appliance at all times including sleep, unless you have been specifically instructed otherwise. It is usually worn 24 hours a day for one year and then to sleep indefinitely. The only time it may be removed is to eat.
2. Take the appliance out and carefully brush your teeth. Make sure that you clean the inside, outside, and biting surfaces of all your teeth.
3. After you have finished brushing your teeth, clean the appliance by holding it in the palm of your hand, carefully brushing the inside and outside surfaces. A hand brush and soap do a better job than a toothbrush.
4. Replace the retainers as soon as you have cleaned them.
5. I want the delicate adjustment to remain in perfect order. Be gentle when removing and replacing the appliance.
6. The plastic taste sometimes found in a new appliance will disappear in a day or so.
7. If you keep the appliance in place, your speech will be completely normal in two or three days. Reading aloud to yourself can help you become more quickly accustomed to its presence. The safest place for your appliance is in the mouth.
8. Please do not wrap the retainers in a paper napkin or tissue because someone will throw them away! Do not put them in your pocket because they may break. Please put them in a plastic container with a good lid and your name, address, and telephone number taped on the inside, if you must take them out.

Often the latter part of the retention part will require retainer wear only while sleeping. I recommend you wear them to bed indefinitely if you want to keep your teeth straight. It has been our experience that retainers are not broken and cannot be lost while in the mouth. However, should they become lost or broken, please notify us immediately, so that we can replace them as soon as possible before any damaging tooth movement can occur.

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