

## **RETAINERS**

**Congratulations!** You have just completed your “active” phase of orthodontic treatment. Your braces have been removed. However, there is still one more very important step to ensure that your teeth remain in their new position – RETAINERS. This vital final phase can add some finishing touches, maintains the improvement and helps protect your investment in your new smile.

The fact that you have completed the active phase of treatment does not ensure permanently straight teeth. Wearing your retainers faithfully is essential to the stability of your orthodontic treatment. Patients who do not wear their retainers as instructed often see shifting of their teeth and encounter other adverse effects. Never discontinue retainer wear on your own.

We will continue to monitor your retainers for approximately 12 months following their initial insertion. If you should wish any appointments after that, there will be a fee charged per visit.

If you lose or break your retainer, call our office immediately. If a problem occurs over a weekend, or a time when our office is closed, call our office and leave a message on the answering machine, and we will contact you as soon as possible. Continue to wear your appliance if possible. A fee will be assessed for repair or replacement of broken or lost retainers.

Together we got the job done. Do not risk less than the best long-term results. Remember that your teeth need time to adapt to their new position with the help of your new retainers. Your reward will be a lifetime of healthy, comfortable and beautiful smiles.

There are several different types of retainers, each with specific information for proper wearing instructions, care and cleaning. Please read all of the information on the reverse side of this page that applies to the retainers that you have received.

## □ REMOVABLE RETAINERS

In order to be effective, your retainers must initially be worn AT ALL TIMES. They must be worn when you are eating, removed for brushing, and then re-inserted. Contact sports and swimming are the only exceptions to the 24/7 rule.

For the first few days you may notice extra saliva in your mouth, and your speech may be slightly affected. You will soon adjust to this provided that you wear the appliance as you have been instructed.

Without proper care, your retainer will collect food debris, which can lead to irritated, swollen gums, improper fit of the retainer, and an unpleasant odour. Always brush your teeth and your retainer after each meal and before you go to bed. Use your regular toothbrush and toothpaste if you wish. If your toothbrush is not available, remove your retainer, rinse your mouth with water, and rinse all loose food debris from your retainer before replacing it. **Do not clean your appliance with hot water; use warm or cool water only.**

The easiest way to prevent losing or breaking your retainer is to keep it in your mouth. Never wrap it in a tissue or place it in your pocket. Do not play with it or flip it with your tongue. Remove it only by the side clasps.

The same eating rules apply for your retainer as for your braces. You must avoid hard or sticky foods, and cut large food into small, bite-size pieces. Chewing any kind of gum is still not permitted.

After full-time wear for several months, we will inform you when it is no longer necessary to wear your appliances during daytime hours. Remember to keep it in the case provided.

## □ ESSIX RETAINER

For the next 21 days, your retainer must be worn AT ALL TIMES, except when brushing and eating. After 21 days, you may wear your retainer during evening and night-time hours EVERY DAY. This means you must insert it after dinner and remove it before breakfast.

During daytime hours when it is not in your mouth, please store it ONLY in the case we provide. Make sure that it is perfectly clean before storing it. Do not use toothpaste on your ESSIX retainer as this could dull its brilliance. Simply scrub it well with your regular toothbrush and rinse it thoroughly.

You may notice that it feels slightly tight when you reinsert it in the evening; this feeling should go away quickly.

If you notice that your teeth are shifting, wear your appliance full time (except to eat and brush) for 48 hours, and then return to night time wear. If this does not correct the problem, call our office immediately.

If the edges of the appliance are sharp or rough, you may wish to try smoothing them with a clean emery board.

## □ FIXED RETAINERS

A small retaining wire was attached to the tongue side surfaces of your teeth. The wire is secured (bonded) to all the front teeth with the same type of material that is used to secure braces. Therefore, the same eating rules apply to the wire as were applied to the braces. You must continue to avoid all sticky and hard foods INCLUDING chewing gum, and you must cut up foods such as apples and carrots.

If you notice that the wire has come away from any of the teeth, or if your teeth shift or move, please call our office as soon as possible. We will assess if we can repair your wire, or if it needs to be replaced. Please be aware that repair or replacement usually requires an additional fee.

You will find it necessary to use the small, reusable loops (floss threaders) that we have provided for you, to floss under the wire. It is very important to floss on a regular basis in order to prevent build-up of plaque under, behind and around the wire, as well as between your teeth. It is also important to visit your family dentist regularly for professional cleaning. Your family dentist can also monitor your wire at your regular check-up appointments.