



RETAINERS



Congratulations! You have completed the active phase of your orthodontic treatment and have had your braces removed. You have achieved a significant milestone and you should maintain your achievement. Retainers are important to maintaining your new beautiful smile.

HOW DO RETAINERS WORK?

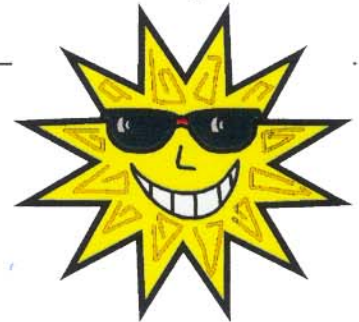
Your braces moved your teeth into correct alignment. If you were to end your treatment now your teeth would most certainly return to their original positions. Retainers hold your teeth in their new positions while the bones stabilize. Remember that your teeth can continue to shift throughout your life. Not wearing your retainers can prevent them from fitting and will result in the need for new retainers or possibly further treatment.

HOW LONG MUST RETAINERS BE WORN?

- **For the first 6 months you need to wear your retainer 22 hours a day.** This first 6 months are very critical as your teeth have just acquired their new positions and are very prone to movement. During the first 6 months your retainers should only be removed for eating or cleaning.
- After the first 6 months you can **slowly** start to initiate a part time schedule for wearing your retainers. Start by wearing your retainers 10-12 hours at night. If you notice that your retainers are getting tight you need to wear them for a few more hours each day. Remember to listen to your teeth, they will let you know if you are wearing your retainers often enough.
- After spending time in braces you don't want to lose your new smile. Wear your retainers as often as you need to keep them fitting properly. If your retainer is not fitting it means that your teeth are shifting. In order to maintain your smile for life you should wear your retainers at least a few nights a week indefinitely. **Retainers are for life.**

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY RETAINER?

- Never wrap retainers in paper towels, tissues, or napkins.
- Never place them in your pocket, purse, or backpack unprotected.
- Never leave them where they can be exposed to direct sunlight or in a hot car.
- Never place your retainers in hot water, boiling water, or in the dishwasher.



There will be a repair or replacement charge for damaged or lost retainers.

Cleaning & Maintenance:

- 1 Always rinse your retainer with water when you take it out. Allowing saliva to dry on the retainer can cause unpleasant odors and a yellow cloudy residue.
- 2 When brushing your teeth, brush your retainers with a small amount of toothpaste.
- 3 Soak your retainer in any denture or retainer cleaner at least once a week.
- 4 Once a month disinfect your retainer for 10 minutes in a cup of warm water with 1 teaspoon of bleach. Scrub retainer with a toothbrush, rinse with fresh water, and soak in fresh water for another 10 minutes.

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