



RETAINER INSTRUCTIONS

Congratulations on having your braces removed. Now comes the most important part of the process, making sure that great smile stays that way. It means that you are now responsible for making sure that your teeth do not move, which means you will have to be disciplined about wearing your retainers.

We might have put your teeth where we wanted them to be, but that does not mean that this is where your mouth wants your teeth to stay. Your mouth was pretty happy where your teeth used to be positioned. Your facial muscles put your teeth in that position, and your facial muscles will do everything to try to get them back there. This will continue for the remainder of your life. So, wearing your retainers is a *lifetime event*.

This does not mean that you will have to wear your retainers everywhere you go for the rest of your life. We ask that you wear the retainers as prescribed. As time passes, your teeth will become more stable, allowing you to spend more time without your retainer. The other benefit is that you will maintain that great smile.

For the removable retainers, usually the upper, but sometimes an upper and lower, you will start with full-time wear (24/7), then to night-time wear (12/7), then to sleep-time wear, and finally to occasional wear. The following regimen is used in our office:

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| ○ Full-time wear | First 2 months |
| ○ Night wear | Next 10 months |
| ○ Sleep wear | Next 2 years |
| ○ Once a week | After 3 years, for the remainder of your life |

If one of your retainers is a permanent retainer (glued to the back of your teeth), you will need to make sure that you keep it clean. This means that you will have to spend extra time brushing and flossing around the wire to make sure that you do not build-up any plaque around it. If this happens, the hygienist will have to spend more time cleaning around it. This in turns increases the chances of the wire coming loose. If it does, we will have to replace it with a new one or make you a removable retainer. So, please keep it clean. Please stay away from whole apples and frozen Snickers. Floss as we have shown you at the office.

When wearing your retainer full-time, it can be removed when eating, brushing your teeth, playing a contact sport, or playing in the band. When it is taken out of your mouth, it needs to go directly into the case provided. If you put it in your pocket it will break. If you put it in a napkin or lay it down, it will be thrown away. If you leave them out around the house, your dog will attack it. So, if you do not have your case with you, you should not be taking it out of your mouth. Also, if you do not keep them clean, calcium deposits will form, creating a horrible odor. So, brush the retainers with a toothbrush and toothpaste, preferably immediately after removing them.

Remember, your teeth **will not move** if you wear your retainers. We see patients all the time that have stopped wearing their retainers, only to find out that their teeth really did move. Usually, it is on the advice of a friend that tells them that they never wore their retainers. If the teeth have shifted, we know that you have not worn them for a while. They are not going to shift in only one or two days. The wisdom teeth are no longer an excuse either. So, if they have moved, **there will be a charge to realign the teeth**. We might use the same retainer, a new retainer, or might possibly need to place braces back on your teeth. No one is happy when this situation occurs.

The clear retainer comes with a ninety day warranty but should last for several years, if the patient is not a grinder or clencher. The Hawley retainer comes with a ninety day warranty for defects with regards to breakage, but should last a lifetime if cared for properly. The fixed lingual wire comes with a 6 month warranty. Please ask our front staff what the replacement cost is for each type of retainer.

Please take care of your teeth and your retainers. Protect that great smile you've been given!