



YOUR RETENTION

PURPOSE The retention phase of your orthodontic treatment starts the day you receive your retainers. The function of your retainers is to hold your teeth in their new positions as your bite settles and as your lips, cheeks, tongue, gum tissue and root ligaments get used to your new bite. Remember that your teeth have been artificially held by your braces during your treatment and that it takes a while for your body to get used to the corrected bite with the braces off. Without retainers the teeth would tend to move in the direction of their original positions. So please, follow our instructions carefully. An additional charge will be incurred should it be necessary to retreat teeth which have moved due to inadequate retainer wear.

TYPE OF RETAINERS Some retainers are removable, some are glued to the teeth, some are made of plastic and wire, some of rubber similar to mouth guards. By far the most common types of retainers we use are removable "Hawley" retainers made of plastic and wire and fixed "cuspid to cuspid" retainers. The "Hawley" retainer is used for your upper teeth and where indicated, your lower teeth. The "cuspid to cuspid" retainer is used to retain the lower incisors and is glued directly to the teeth. Occasionally we suggest a lower "Hawley" retainer after the fixed "cuspid to cuspid" retainer is removed.

If your front teeth were very crooked, we often use wire splints which are glued to the backs of those teeth to further help their retention.

TIME The length of time the teeth must be retained varies with each individual and with the severity of the original problem. Some patients require little retention, while others require retention for the rest of their lives. Usually we ask you to wear your "Hawley" retainer full time for six months. This however does not include meal time or time spent in active sports. After six months, we reduce the time to night wear. From then on, retainer wear is further reduced as the stability of the teeth allows, which varies from person to person.

CARE OF YOUR RETAINER It is our experience that retainers do not break under normal use and certainly cannot be lost while in the mouth. Please treat your "Hawley" retainer with respect. Keep it away from your dog, which will want to chew the plastic. Do not forget it in a restaurant or school cafeteria. Please do not expose it to excess heat such as hot water or direct sunlight on your car's dash.

Care must also be taken of your fixed "cuspid to cuspid" retainer. This retainer is generally quite resistant to chewing forces, but extra hard foods can crack the plastic cement or deform the wire. Such foods as whole carrots, taffy, peanut brittle, etc. will damage this retainer and are to be avoided with the front teeth.



HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR RETAINERS

1. Proper cleaning instructions for your retainers are as follows: Remove retainer when brushing your teeth and brush the retainer with a soft bristled toothbrush, toothpaste and water. Rinse thoroughly. We also recommend that you soak your retainers at least "once" a week in an effervescent solution (a denture type cleaner). There are many on the market from which you can choose. When soaking in this solution use a **cool temperature** of water so you don't distort or melt the retainers, as hot water will do so. Some people like to soak their retainers in this solution on a daily basis during their main meal as to not lose anytime in wearing their retainers.
2. Keep your retainers in the retainer case whenever they are not being worn. Do not wrap it up in a napkin, place in a lunch bag or on a lunch tray when you eat because it can easily be tossed into the garbage.
3. Make sure you do not put retainers in a purse or school bag without it being protected in the case. It can become bent, broken or distorted without the protection of the case.
4. Remove your retainers when eating so you do not crack the acrylic or distort the wires when eating anything hard, crunchy, sticky or chewy.
5. Remove retainers when playing any contact or physical sports and place in their designated case.
6. Keep retainers away from where pets and young children can get at them. They love to chew on these.
7. Keep retainers away from areas where an extreme change of temperature can take place. Example: Dash of car, radiators etc. (dash of your car in the hot sun, it may melt, or the cold, it may crack).
8. Make sure you follow the retainer care instructions given to you carefully in order to keep your retainers intact, so they can do their job of retaining your teeth in their new position. Be sure to wear your retainers as instructed. If any shifting or changes seem to take place call our office immediately to schedule an appointment.