

# RETAINERS

We hope you are happy with your new smile

## What is a retainer?

Retainers can be fixed and removable. A fixed retainer is a thin wire that is stuck behind your front teeth. A removable retainer is a clear, thin plastic “mouthguard” designed to keep your teeth straight after treatment.

## Why do I have to wear a retainer?

When orthodontic treatment has been completed, there is a tendency for the teeth to go back towards their previous pre-treatment position – this is known as **RELAPSE**.

Also as part of getting older, minor tooth movements can occur – long term wear of retainers can help prevent these changes but even with good retainer wear some minor tooth movement will take place.

It is important to realise that your teeth are not set in stone and they will try to move back to their original position if you do not wear your retainers as instructed.

## How long will I have to wear the retainers?

The removable retainers should be worn as instructed by your orthodontist. The removable retainers are usually worn every night for 9-12 months and then the wear is gradually reduced with time to one or twice a week.

It is extremely important that you increase the level of wear of your retainer if you find that it is tight or uncomfortable as this indicates that your teeth have started to move.

## How do I look after my retainers?

Insert and remove the removable retainer as instructed by your orthodontist. Always use two hands to do this or you can fracture your retainer.

When the retainers are not in your mouth they should be kept safe in a brace box to avoid damage. As the removable retainer is just worn at night you can keep it clean by rinsing it with cold water. Don't use toothpaste as this can scratch the retainer material and never put them in hot water or they will shrink.

The retainers can be freshened by using a special cleaner such as “Retainer Brite”.

## Fixed retainers

These are not visible and will only take your tongue a day or two to get used to them. You will soon forget they are there.

Ensure you brush these retainers with a normal toothbrush and toothpaste every time you brush your teeth. Use Superfloss regularly to clean between the teeth. Normal floss can't be used as it can't go down between the teeth. Superfloss is threaded through the teeth below the retainer and above.

- **Now the braces are off its worth seeing your dentist for a check up and scale and polish**
- **If you play contact sports will need a new mouthguard – ask us or your dentist**
- **Make sure you bring your removable retainers to each appointment**