

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 once 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.

If a retainer rubs on the gum, you can adjust the edges by trimming with nail clippers or small scissors. Sharp or rough edges can be smoothed with a nail file/emery board – do contact us for advice

CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR RETAINER BREAKS – YOUR TEETH ARE AT RISK OF MOVING

How do I look after my retainers?

Always use two hands to remove the retainers; follow your orthodontist’s instructions or they can break.

Always remove them when eating or drinking

When not in your mouth retainers should be kept safe in a brace box. Clean retainers regularly by rinsing with cold water – you can use an old toothbrush with soap.

Don’t use toothpaste as this can scratch the retainer material and never put them in hot water or they will shrink. Ensure dogs/cats don’t get hold of them!

Retainers can occasionally 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 - please see your dentist for a check up and a scale and polish**
- **If you play contact sports you will need a new mouthguard – please ask us to give advice on this**
- **Please bring your retainers to each appointment – we review your retainers for free for a 12 month period**
- **We offer an annual retention check scheme to all our patients – please ask us for information on this scheme**