

# RETAINERS



**Congratulations!** You have begun the last part of your orthodontic treatment, retention. Now that your 'braces' are off, your teeth will look bigger & feel slimy! It will take a little while for things to feel normal again. You might also find that your gums have become swollen because of difficulties with brushing. This should be back to normal within the next few days.

## FIVE RULES

1. At first, wear your retainers ALL day & night. You must wear your retainers as instructed.
2. Remember to bring your retainers to each appointment.
3. ALWAYS remove your retainers for eating, drinking, trumpet playing, cleaning, sports or swimming. Replace them in your mouth immediately afterwards.
4. Keep your retainers clean by brushing them after eating. Can't brush? Then make sure to rinse your mouth & retainers. Liquid soap is suitable for cleaning your retainers. Avoid heat (hot water or leaving them in hot cars), abrasives, denture soakers or caustic agents.
5. When your retainers are not in your mouth they need to be kept in the case provided. Do not leave retainers lying around or wrapped in tissues, they might get lost or thrown away. Also cats & dogs love to chew them so don't leave them lying around!

**The success of this phase of your treatment is totally up to you, the responsibility is yours!**

Without proper retention, your teeth could return to their original position. Some movement is inevitable, however, you can minimise any unwanted movement by properly wearing your retainers as instructed. Your retainers should fit comfortably & securely. If you have ANY problems, or lose or break a retainer, you must let us know.

A replacement fee will apply for a lost or damaged retainer, or one that does not fit due to lack of proper wear.

You can expect to wear your retainers' fulltime for the next six months. After that you will proceed to nights only, for approximately six months. After this you will be encouraged to try every second night & then every third night, & so on.

By the time you are wearing your retainers two or three nights a week, we can reasonably expect that things are relatively stable. Around that time you will be "out of braces" for about 2 years. This will be the time that I will dismiss you from the practice ("complete").

Over a lifetime your face will continue to grow (but by much smaller amounts than you experienced during puberty). The lower jaw slightly outgrows the upper jaw & this can lead to some crowding of the lower front teeth as you get older. You may have heard that wisdom teeth cause this to happen, but this is not so. (Other changes include nose & chin growth; lip thickness & length changes; & lower face lengthening.)

The GOOD news is that about 95% of what we achieve with braces, "holds up" well in the long term. It is up to you to decide when to stop wearing your retainers. You will know when they fit well by the way they feel & can therefore wear them at a rate that is comfortable. It will do no harm to continue to wear them after your treatment is "complete" - either until you are sick of them, or until they wear out!

