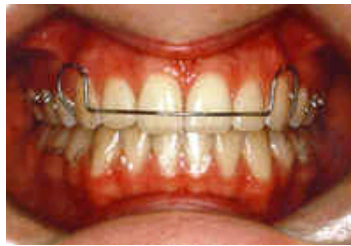


Retainers

Now that you have retainers you may have some questions you would like answered.

What is a retainer and how important is it I wear it?

Retainers are designed to keep your teeth straight and can either be removable or fixed to the teeth. Now that your teeth are straight, if you do not wear your retainer, your teeth are likely to drift towards their original positions. If this happens it may be difficult, if not impossible, to correct.



Removable retainers

How long will I have to wear the retainers?

This will vary according to how your teeth originally looked, before the orthodontic treatment was started. However, as a general rule you will be asked to wear a removable retaining appliance for at least 6 months. This may mean wearing it all the time at first, before going on to just night-time wear. You will be advised if long term wear is required.



A fixed retainer

How might the retainer affect me?

Your speech will be different. Practice speaking with the brace in place e.g. read out aloud at home on your own, and in this way your speech will return to normal within a couple of days. You may also find yourself swallowing a lot to begin with. This is quite normal and will quickly pass. If you have a fixed retainer then you will need to take extra care to keep it clean.

Can I eat normally?

Whether you have been instructed to eat with your retaining appliance in or out, you should take care to avoid:

- Eating sugary things such as cakes, biscuits, and sweets, etc. between meals.
- Fizzy drinks, including diet drinks, or excessive amounts of fruit juice.

What about toothbrushing?

It is important you brush well three times per day and use a fluoride toothpaste. If possible carry a brush with you for use after lunch. Take the brace out to clean your teeth. You should also gently brush the brace, taking care not to damage the wires. A daily fluoride mouthrinse should be used last thing at night, after toothbrushing. Failure to keep your teeth and brace clean will lead to permanent scarring of your teeth.

Can I remove the brace?

If the brace is removable but you have been asked to wear it full time, it should only be removed for cleaning. When it is

not in your mouth it should be in its protective box. Do not click the brace in and out with your tongue as this can cause the brace to break. If the retainer can't be worn because it is being repaired, your teeth may not remain straight.

How often will I now need an appointment?

You will not need to be seen so often now the retainers are in place. You will be advised about this. Do I need to see my regular dentist? Yes. It is a good idea to visit your regular dentist now that you are wearing retainers since it will be easier to check your teeth for decay. This is particularly so if your previous brace was fixed to your teeth.

What do I do if I play contact sports?

You should obtain a new gumshield now you are in retention.

What do I do if my retainers break?

Ring up for an appointment as soon as is reasonably possible. Do not wait for your next routine appointment as your teeth may move whilst not wearing your retainers.

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