

INFORMATION SHEET 4 – REMOVABLE RETAINERS



When fixed braces are removed, the teeth can quickly move back into crooked positions, this is called relapse. The teeth need to be held in their new straight position while the gums and jaw bone “firm up”. This is achieved by using retainers.

As both children and adults get older, our jaws continue to grow and our teeth become more crooked as part of the normal ageing process. This still occurs following orthodontic treatment, therefore, long term use of the retainers is recommended. After about 12 months use of the retainers, the amount of wear can be reduced slowly over a period of years, but we still advise occasional use to maintain your orthodontic result in later years.

Wearing your removable retainer

Your retainers will fit to your teeth closely and should be worn at all times, except for eating, drinking and cleaning for at least the first 6 months. You will then be reviewed by the orthodontist – at this time the wearing of the retainers will normally be reduced to night time wear only.

At first the retainers may feel a little strange in the mouth but after a few days they will feel normal and part of your mouth. As the retainers age some holes may appear on the biting surfaces, as long as they are still fitting well they will not affect the retainer holding your teeth. However, if your retainers break or are lost please contact our surgery. Please keep pets (especially dogs) away from retainers as they enjoy chewing them!

Cleaning

Clean the retainers with a toothbrush and hold under running cold water. Do not use hot water, toothpaste or bleach on them. To keep the retainers fresh and free from bacteria we recommend the use of “Retainer Brite”. Do ensure the teeth are completely clean before fitting your retainers every night. You can dip the retainers in fluoride mouthwash before bed to help protect the teeth.

General advice

Be very careful with the retainers, if they broken they cannot be easily replaced, we recommend that you keep the retainers in a safe place in a rigid plastic container when they are not in your mouth.

Please remember to contact us as soon as you realise you have lost or damaged your retainer as your treatment could relapse without them.