

# *Patient information leaflet*

## *Retainers*

### What is a retainer and how is it important 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 does happen it may be difficult, if not impossible, to correct.

### How long will I have to wear 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 1 year**. This may mean wearing it at **all times** at first, before going on to just **night – time** wear. You will be advised if long-term wear is required.

### How might the retainer affect me?

**Your speech will be different.** Practice speaking with the retainers in place *e.g.* read out aloud at home on your own, and 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 a normal and will quickly pass.

### Can I eat normally?

Please remove your retainer appliance when eating, 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 tooth brushing?

It is important you to brush well **three times per day** and use **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 mouth rinse** should be used last thing at night **after tooth brushing**. 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 to wear it full time, it should only be removed for eating, cleaning and sports. When it is not in your mouth it should be in its **protective box**.

### Will I need to wear another brace once my treatment is finished?

Once the active phase of your treatment is finished, it will be necessary to wear a **retaining brace**. This may be *removable* or it may be *fixed* behind your front teeth. The length of time this has to be worn can vary.

### How often will I need an appointment?

You will need **appointments twice a year** during treatment for the retainer to be checked and maintain.

### Do I still need to see my regular dentist?

**Yes.** It will be important you still have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment so that your teeth can be checked for decay.

### What if I play contact sports?

It is recommended you wear a **gumshield**. This will also be the case if you enjoy riding a **bicycle, roller-skating, or skareboarding**. You will be advised about this.

### What if I play a musical instrument?

You may remove your retainer to play a musical instrument.

### What do I do if my brace breaks?

Ring up for an appointment as soon as it is reasonably possible. **Do not** wait for your next routine appointment as the **breakage may slow your treatment, or may result in damage to your teeth**. If you repeatedly break your brace treatment may be stopped. The daytime telephone number you should contact is: 0207 924 4224.

## Contact us

If you are concerned about your condition following this operation or if you need advice, please contact the Reception between 9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday on 0207 924 4224, so we can arrange an urgent appointment for you.