

Retention is the most important part of your orthodontic treatment and all patients need orthodontic retention after braces or aligners.

ORTHODONTIC RETENTION IS ESSENTIAL

To give you a beautiful smile with straight teeth and a good bite, orthodontic appliances move your teeth into new positions. When you have orthodontic treatment at a younger age, treatment may also improve the shape and alignment of your jaws.

Moving your teeth stretches elastic tissues in the gums, which hold teeth to the gums and underlying bone. Once your treatment is complete, these tissues try to pull your teeth back into their original positions. Retainers reduce or stop that unwanted movement, to give the tissues time to adapt and change to the new teeth positions. For that reason, retainers are essential to maintaining your good orthodontic result.

Discontinuing retention allows your teeth to move back toward their old positions, called relapse. If relapse is severe enough, it may warrant re-treatment with braces or aligners again. After completing your orthodontic treatment, we will continue to monitor your teeth and retainers for several years. After which, you may continue retention with your dentist at your regular routine dental check-up appointments.

TYPES OF RETAINERS

In general, there are two types of retainers: removable, and fixed. Removable retainers are sometimes called "plates" and can be made of plastic, or may have some metal wires incorporated into them. They can be easily removed for eating and drinking, wearing mouthguards and for tooth brushing. Fixed retainers are made of stainless steel wire which is bonded (glued) onto the back of the teeth, to hold them in position.

REMOVABLE RETAINERS

Usually, removable retainers need to be worn full time at first, and then worn part time. The removable retainers can be taken out for eating and drinking, wearing mouthguards for sports, and tooth brushing. They can be lost and broken. Should this happen, please arrange an appointment with us as soon as possible to arrange a replacement.

Patients that do not wear removable retainers as instructed, or stop wearing them altogether, will experience relapse. We are happy to make your retainers when necessary, and to support you to maintain retention.

FIXED RETAINERS

Because these retainers are stuck and glued on the back of your teeth, you cannot lose them or forget to wear them. These advantages have led to the increase in their popularity and use. However, they do require better oral hygiene and tooth brushing around them, as they cannot be removed for cleaning.

Fixed retainers still need to be checked periodically to ensure the wire is intact and there has not been any failure of bond to the tooth. Please contact us as soon as you notice anything wrong or if something is hurting.

RETENTION IS LIFE LONG

A common misconception by the general public, and some dentists, is that the result after orthodontic treatment is permanent. This is not so. It has been scientifically proven that teeth constantly move throughout life. It is a natural part of the aging process (like wrinkles and grey hair).

We encourage all patients to continue orthodontic retention, for as long as they desire straight teeth and a great smile.

LIFE-LONG ORAL HEALTH

A prime function of your dentist and our care, is the maintenance of oral health. Research has shown that people who have received orthodontic treatment generally have better oral health throughout life. This may be due to better positions of the teeth, the encouragement to maintain good oral health, or both. Other research has also shown people with good oral hygiene suffer less heart disease, fewer strokes, less respiratory disease and fewer complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

It is important that you continue to see your dentist for regular dental check-up appointments and preventative care to maintain optimum dental health before, during and after orthodontic treatment.