

Important Information About Retainers

About Retention and Retainers

Now that your braces have been removed, we want you to maintain that healthy, beautiful smile. Retention is the only way to prevent unwanted tooth movement. A retainer is an appliance that helps keep teeth in their new position after braces have been removed. There are a variety of retainers; some are cemented to your teeth (bonded) and some are removable. Throughout life, tooth position is constantly changing. This is especially true of teeth that have undergone orthodontic movement. The best that orthodontic treatment can do is to give teeth a new starting point in life. Factors such as poor growth patterns, clenching or grinding habits, dental work, accidents, chewing forces and the normal effects of aging can change the positions of the teeth. Wisdom teeth may also contribute to occasional problems, but they usually do not cause a change to the alignment of the teeth provided retainers are being worn effectively. **Teeth will move unless they are retained.** You will need to wear retainers to protect your investment. Our treatment fee includes initial retainers and office visits during the first year of the retention period. If you discontinue retainer wear, you must assume responsibility for any tooth movement.

Fixed Retainers

Fixed retainers are wires that are bonded to the back of the teeth. They are used most frequently on the back of the lower six front teeth. Fixed retainers may be replaced with removable retainers at any time, particularly if plaque build-up becomes a problem or if the dentist is concerned with oral hygiene. If a bond becomes dislodged, or if the wire becomes loose, please call the office to schedule a repair. Sharp or rough edges should also be repaired. Fees may apply and are based on time and lab costs.

Removable Retainers

There is no specific end-point to your retention period. To help prevent future dental changes, retainers should be worn indefinitely. Wearing your retainer is the best way to preserve that healthy, beautiful smile you worked so hard to achieve. The following simple guidelines for wearing and caring for your retainer will help you maintain the results from your treatment:

Retention Plan	
First 3 Months	<i>Since the teeth are the least stable when braces are first removed:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• wear full time and only remove for mealtime, brushing and rough/contact sports
After 3 Months (Months 3 – 24)	<i>If there have been no problems in the first 3 months and the retainers fit comfortably without any tightness:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• wear 8 hours per day (e.g. while sleeping)
After 2 years	<i>Retainers should still be worn nightly, but it is acceptable to reduce the time of wear provided retainers fit comfortably.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• wear a minimum of 1 night per week; wear more often if retainer feels tight <i>If retainers are uncomfortable or not fitting well, they may need to be replaced.</i>

Please see reverse side

Removable Retainers – Con't

Caring for your Removable Retainer

Do

- Wear retainer as instructed
- Remove retainer for contact sports (remember to wear your mouthguard!)
- Remove retainer when eating
- Keep retainer in a case when not in mouth
- Brush and rinse retainer regularly
- Call our office if retainer doesn't fit, causes pain, breaks or is lost
- Keep retainer away from pets
- Increase frequency of wear if retainer is tight

Don't

- Wrap retainer in a napkin (it can be mistaken for garbage and thrown out)
- Put retainer in dishwasher, boiling water or on dashboard (it can distort if exposed to high temperatures)
- Place retainer in pocket or backpack (it can break, get damaged, or get lost)
- Swim in lake with retainer (it will sink if it falls out of your mouth)

Problems with Removable Retainers

Loose Retainers	<p><i>Loose retainers usually indicate good stability with minimal tooth changes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If too loose (falling out during normal speech), please call for appointment and continue to wear your retainer until it can be adjusted.
Tight Retainers	<p><i>Tight retainers that are uncomfortable or making teeth tender, usually indicate dental changes resulting from inadequate retainer wear:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase amount of time retainers are worn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If problem persists, please call for an appointment.
Lost or Broken Retainers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call our office immediately so replacements or repairs can be made before tooth movement occurs. Fees are based on lab charges; • Never try to adjust a retainer.
Retainers Don't Fit	<p><i>Retainers that don't fit may indicate they have not been worn for a period of time. When this happens:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retainer may need to be adjusted; • New retainer may have to be made or in more severe cases, braces may have to be placed if you wish to re-align the teeth. Additional fees will apply.

Thank you for choosing Kawartha Orthodontics. It has been a pleasure working with you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 705-743-8085.