



Retainers General information

Congratulations! You will shortly have your braces off to unveil your beautiful smile! You are now entering an important phase of your treatment- **the Retention Phase.**

Completed orthodontic treatment does not guarantee perfectly straight teeth for the rest of your life. Teeth have a memory and often try to move back to their original positions as long as possible.

Retainers are required to keep your teeth in their new positions. Regular retainer wear is necessary for your whole life as your body is continually undergoing growth and maturation. Minor irregularities, particularly in the lower front teeth may occur. In summary, you need your retainers to keep your teeth as straight as possible. But even with good retainer wear, your teeth may move slightly.

What is a retainer?

Retainers are designed to keep your teeth straight and it is important that you wear them as instructed and they can either be removable or fixed to the teeth. All patients need to wear retainers after treatment.

Fixed retainer

A fixed retainer is formed by a small rectangular wire that is stuck onto the back of the bottom and eventually top front teeth which is hidden on the inside of the teeth, so it is not visible. Permanent retainers often do a great job. However, super floss, tepe brushes or a waterpik are required daily to prevent any cavities or tartar build up cleaning around it and if it ever gets loose, you should seek advice. Just because they are fixed permanently does not mean they cannot come off. A fixed retainer should last between 5 and 10 years and we will give you a guarantee for free replacement for the first year after treatment completion. After that we will charge a small fee of £150 to replace or repair your fixed retainer.

Because they are permanently affixed in the mouth (as it stuck in full-time) the success of the process doesn't rely on the compliance of the patient. No one has to worry about losing the retainer or forgetting to put it in because it will always be there.

If your teeth were heavily rotated or you had large amount of spacing before your treatment, fixed retainers could do a better job of holding them in place more securely. If the fixed retainer is being removed, the teeth might relapse and change position.

Removable retainers

Removable retainers are mostly clear, tightly fitting splints that are specifically cast for the teeth of the patient to maintain the new position of the patient's teeth, but there are many more retainers and the orthodontist will decide what is best for you.

These retainers should be examined on a regular basis to ensure that they are in good condition. We recommend in the first year to come back every 3 months, second year every 6 month and after once a year. Regardless of which retainer is chosen by your orthodontist and yourself, the crux of the matter is that retention is a crucial aspect of any orthodontic treatment. Without it, you would have to go back to square one and start potentially years of orthodontic work from the beginning. Protect your investment and time; use a retainer!