

RETAINER INSTRUCTIONS



Wow, you've made it to the retainer stage of your treatment! This usually means that the latest active tooth-moving stage of your treatment has been completed, so CONGRATULATIONS!!! Now that we have your teeth where we want them, we need to make sure that they stay there: the retainers will do just that. Here are some things that you'll want to know about your retainers.

1. The retainers need to be worn faithfully if they are to work properly. This usually means that they need to be worn full-time for the first few months after they are given to you. Later on, we'll probably just have you wear them at night. If you don't wear them as much as Dr. Wheeler requests, your teeth could very easily move into the wrong position, and most people don't like having braces put on again! You'll find that you very quickly get used to the retainers—they're really no big deal compared to what you've just had on your teeth!
2. The retainers might make your teeth a little sore for a day or two, but this is usually not much of a problem.
3. It might be a little difficult to speak perfectly normally, but this problem usually goes away in a day or two. You can speed up this process of getting used to speaking with the retainers in by talking a lot (this isn't much of a problem for a lot of people we know). Also, you might tend to salivate a bit more than usual, but this problem also goes away in a day or two. Likewise, any funny taste you might notice now will disappear completely very soon.
4. Your retainers are very delicate. They will break if you drop them on a very hard surface, sit on them, or allow any number of different calamities to befall them. To protect them when they are not in your mouth, always keep them in the plastic case we give you.
5. It's easy to lose retainers! This is especially true at mealtime, when you might be tempted to take them out of your mouth and hide them under a napkin where they're not so obvious to your friends. All too often, people forget that they put their retainers under the napkin, and promptly throw them away. It's no fun looking through a garbage dumpster for your retainers! Again, place the retainers in the plastic case so you won't be tempted to hide them from view. Always take your plastic case to school! If you do lose your retainers, there is a charge of \$250 each to replace them.
6. Dogs love chewing on retainers if they can get at them. I don't know why they do this—but they do!! This is obviously not a good situation—the retainers won't fit your dog, and they won't fit you either after your dog has tried them on!
7. The retainers don't do well if they get too hot. In fact, they won't fit you if they are left on the dashboard in a hot car, or if they are put in any other place where they get much hotter than your body temperature. So, don't boil them or even bleach them in an attempt to sterilize them. If they need a good cleaning, we recommend soaking them with Efferdent Denture cleaner, which is available at any pharmacy or supermarket.
8. The retainers need to be cleaned every day so that they don't get grungy and dirty. Fortunately, cleaning your retainers is easy—just brush them with your tooth brush right before or after you've brushed your teeth. By the way, don't try to brush your teeth with the retainers in the way.
9. If your retainers have wires on them, please don't try to adjust the wires yourself. If a wire doesn't seem to be fitting properly, call our office so that Dr. Wheeler can help you out. Dr. Wheeler has probably asked you to wear your retainers full time, except when eating or brushing. This is important! You'll get used to them very quickly, and before you know it, Dr. Wheeler will tell you that it's OK to just wear them at night.

Please remember that keeping your teeth straight is really very easy but is also a lifetime commitment. If you've now finished full braces, you can expect that Dr. Wheeler will ask you to continue wearing retainers for the rest of your life. This is just as important as the braces! If you should lose or break your retainers, please let us know right away so we can make a new set for you. Yes, there is a replacement charge, but it's sure worth it to keep your teeth straight!

Dr. Wheeler will see you in a few weeks to see how you're coming along with your retainers and then we'll check you periodically thereafter, although with more and more time between appointments. If, however, you ever have any problems with your retainers between visits, be sure to let us know—we're here to help. We are just a phone call away (951-0151).