

Retainers

Once we have moved the teeth into their ideal positions it is important to keep the teeth there. Therefore, we will ask you to wear retainers after the braces are removed.

What are they?

There are different types of retainer and we use different retainers for slightly different things. There are 2 main categories of retainer: fixed and removable.

The fixed type usually consist of a metal wire that is glued onto the back of the teeth (see figure 1)



Figure 1: A bonded retainer behind the top front teeth.

Because they are glued to the teeth they cannot be removed and so offer permanent retention of the position of those teeth. However, they can be difficult to keep clean, can break and fracture and as a result are not always the best option.

The removable type are used in most cases, sometimes in combination with the fixed type. We usually ask patients to wear these every night for at least a year after the brace is removed.



Figure 2: Different types of removable retainer

What if I don't want to wear them?

You will have worked very hard over a long period to get the teeth in a good position. If you don't wear your retainers then the teeth will quickly move into a worse position.

Unfortunately, if your teeth move as a result of not wearing your retainer then we will not be able to straighten the teeth back again.

How do I look after them?

As with your brace, if you do not look after your retainers then you may cause damage to your teeth. It is of huge importance that a fixed retainer is brushed well to prevent damage to the teeth. The removable retainers should be cleaned every time they are removed. As you will not be wearing them all the time we advise that you buy a box to keep them safe when they are not being worn.

What shall I do if I break or lose them?

You should do your best to keep them safe and look after them but if you do have a problem with the retainers you should contact the department as soon as possible. If you have a prolonged period where either the retainer is not being worn or it is broken then the teeth may move.

Unfortunately, if the retainers need replacing this may incur a charge of £74 per retainer.

How long will I need retainers for?

It is really important that you wear your retainers, as advised, for at least the first year after the brace has been removed. After this first year we will discharge you back into your dentist's care. We will advise you to continue to wear your retainers, on a part-time basis, long term.

If you have a fixed retainer then, after the first year, we will advise you that should there be any problems that you will need to see either your dentist or an orthodontist to have it either repaired or removed.