

Wearing a retainer after brace treatment to keep your teeth in their new position

Orthodontics & Restorative Dentistry

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Information for Patients

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What is a retainer?

After the active brace treatment has finished your teeth need to be kept in their new position. A retainer is used to make sure this happens.

There are 3 types of retainer:

- A removable type made of plastic and wires.
- A removable type made of clear plastic with no wires, which is called an Essix retainer.
- A fixed retainer which is a wire glued to the back of your upper or lower front teeth.

Retainers are essential to hold your teeth in their new position while the bone and gums that support the teeth adapt. There is a natural tendency for some teeth to move after any type of orthodontic treatment. This reduces with time but in some cases you may need to wear a retainer for life if you want to keep your teeth straight for the long term.

Taking care of your retainer

Removable type made of plastic and wires:

This is worn at night only, unless otherwise instructed. They may feel a little big and you may find speaking difficult when wearing it. You will get used to them over time, so please be patient.

If the retainer starts to rub on your gums, please contact the department for help and advice. Do not be tempted to leave the retainer out for a few nights to allow the rubbing to stop. Your teeth will **move**, and when you try to wear the retainer a few days later it will **not** fit. You will then need to have another retainer made for you by a dentist, for which there will be a charge.

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

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Do not be tempted to keep taking the retainer in and out of your mouth or move it around with your tongue. This will cause the retainer to loosen quickly and break.

This type of retainer should be cleaned at least 2 times a day. Clean it in the morning after they are removed and in the evening before putting them in. Leave them in a beaker of clean cold water during the day. Use a toothbrush with some fluoride toothpaste and cold water to clean it.

Essix retainer:

This type of retainer should not be worn when eating. It should be removed for cleaning. It should be cleaned at least 2 times a day. Clean it in the morning after they are removed and in the evening before putting them in. Make sure you support the whole of the retainer when you clean it, to stop it from twisting and cracking across the middle. You can use a toothbrush and toothpaste or a toothbrush and cold soapy water to clean them. If deposits build up on the retainer that cannot be removed with a toothbrush, then a cleaner such as "Retainer brite" could be used.

This type of retainer will usually need replacing throughout life. They can last a few months to a few years, depending on how well you look after them. They can be replaced by your dentist for which there would be a charge.

Fixed retainer:

This type of retainer is fixed to the back of your teeth. They are given in addition to the Essix retainer or removable retainer. As it is fixed, it is very important that the back of the teeth and the retainer is cleaned well using a toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. You will not be able to floss, so it is important that you use a small brush that can clean between your teeth (interdental brush). If the retainer is not cleaned well it can lead to holes in your teeth and gum disease.

It is common for the retainer to break. If this happens please contact the department. If you have been discharged with the retainer left in, then please contact your dentist. Your dentist may charge to remove and replace it.

Contact details

Department of Orthodontics & Restorative Dentistry, Glenfield Hospital, Groby Road, LE3 9QP
Tel: 0116 250 2648 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm).

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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