

## RETAINER INSTRUCTIONS

### Retainers

Retainers are the most important part of your treatment. We cannot stress this enough! When you have worked so hard looking after your brace, attending your appointments and showing real perseverance, it would be such a waste for you to not show good retainer wear. After all it is for your benefit. If you want your teeth to remain nice and straight, retainers must be worn!

Retainers are clear, and custom made to fit your teeth only. We will teach you how to put them in and take them out, and when they are in they are very hard to see, unlike the fixed brace.

### What do retainers do and why are they so important?

Retainers keep your teeth in the position that the fixed brace has put them in.

Your teeth are supported in your jaws by bone. This bone is softer when you are younger, and this is what enables us to move your teeth gradually with the fixed brace.

When the fixed brace is removed the bone still remains soft, so we need to use the retainers to hold the teeth in the straight position, until the bone becomes firm. This is why we like to monitor you for 12 months when your retainers are fitted. 12 months is said to be sufficient time for the teeth to settle into their new positions and the bone surrounding them to become firm enough to hold them. We do recommend that you keep your retainers, look after them and wear them 2/3 nights a week, as

movement is still possible. You can retain for life. This is very common in America. If you want perfection for life, retain for life!! (Tom Cruise does!!)

### What if my retainer breaks or I lose it?

We recommend that you purchase a box from reception, to keep your retainer in when it is not in your mouth.

The NHS will provide you with 1 retainer only, and you may have to pay for a replacement depending on the circumstances of why it is needed. For example; if the retainer has broken due to wear and tear, we will replace it free of charge. If your dog has taken a shine to it and chewed it (which has been known to happen!) you will have to pay for the replacement. This also applies if the retainer is lost – SO TAKE CARE OF YOUR RETAINERS AND BUY A BOX!!!!

A member of staff will inform you of the charges for replacement retainers.

### Looking after your retainers

Your retainers are made from a special type of plastic. Only cold water must be used when cleaning or rinsing them as hot water will distort them. Your retainers must be cleaned at the same time as your teeth. Get yourself a nail brush or soft toothbrush and use liquid hand soap to scrub them, rinsing them thoroughly with cold water when you have finished. Do not use toothpaste as it reacts with the plastic and turns the retainers from clear to cloudy. If you are wearing the retainers full time this won't look very nice (which defeats the object – we still want you to show off that Hollywood smile!).

Recent research shows removable appliances and retainers can become contaminated with bacteria and yeast organisms; therefore, we continue to recommend that patients use an ultrasonic cleaner and Efferves cleaning tablets to remove bacteria and other organisms from the surface of the appliance. Both are available at reception.

When the retainers are not in your mouth, put them in your box. Do not wrap them in tissue paper! Do not keep them in your pocket! Keep them in your box!

Do not eat with the retainers in your mouth. The only drink we advise when wearing your retainer is water, as other liquids will stain or damage it. We also ask you to remove the retainers when you play sports or go swimming. As soon as you have finished brushing, eating, drinking or playing sports, put your retainers back in your mouth. 'Remember straight teeth are not just achieved by wearing a fixed brace; they are achieved by excellent retainer wear!

### Follow up visits

When you come and see us, to get your retainers checked BRING YOUR RETAINERS WITH YOU!!! We need to check they still fit you, so please do not forget.

We will let you know when we will see you again, and give you instructions on how we want you to wear the retainers, whether it is full time or night time wear.

Any questions or queries you may have please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff, we are always here to help.