POST-ORTHODONTIC (BRACES) CARE

Instructions after braces or clear aligner treatment that must be followed

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CONGRATULATIONS ON COMPLETING YOUR COURSE OF ORTHODONTIC CARE 😊

The next stage is ***RETENTION****:* which keeps your teeth in their new position whilst the surrounding tissues are adapting. RETAINERS MATTER! Teeth can gradually move after braces or aligner treatment. Wearing your retainer exactly as instructed helps reduce the risk of unwanted movement. Retention is usually a long-term commitment, and changes in tooth position can still occur over time.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETAINERS

- Follow the wear schedule prescribed for you. The recommended wear schedule is:
  - The first 3 months it is recommended to wear the retainers for 22 hours a day
  - The second 3 months after, it is recommended to wear the retainers at least 8 hours a day
  - Thereafter, it is recommended to wear the retainer **three times a week, indefinitely.**
- Wear your removable retainer consistently. Skipping nights or leaving it out for long periods can allow teeth to move and make the retainer tight or unable to fit.
- Remove clear retainers for meals and for drinks other than cool water, unless your treating clinician has instructed otherwise.
- Keep brushing twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and clean between your teeth every day. Continue regular check-ups with your general dentist as well as any orthodontic retention reviews.
- If you have fixed retainers (behind the teeth), floss them really well with small (navy) Piksters or superfloss.

A QUICK REMINDER

Your retainer is designed to maintain the result – it does not actively straighten teeth again. If it no longer fits or a tooth appears to be moving, contact the practice promptly rather than forcing the retainer into place.

CARING FOR YOUR RETAINERS

It's simple. Good retainer care helps protect both your appliance and your teeth.

IF YOU HAVE A REMOVABLE CLEAR RETAINER:

- Clean it every day. Rinse with cool or lukewarm water and gently brush it with a separate soft toothbrush and handsoap. Use the cleaning product recommended by your dental team, if advised.
- Avoid hot or boiling water, dishwashers and direct heat. Heat can distort the plastic and affect the fit.
- Avoid abrasive toothpaste, strong household cleaners or bleach unless your clinician has specifically recommended a product. These may scratch or damage the retainer.
- Remove the retainer before eating. Water is the safest drink while it is in place; food and other drinks can stain the appliance or become trapped against your teeth.
- Store it in its protective case whenever it is not in your mouth. Do not wrap it in a tissue or leave it where it could be thrown away, stepped on or chewed by pets.
- Use clean fingers to insert and remove it gently and evenly. Do not bite down hard to force it into place.

IF YOU HAVE A BONDED (FIXED) RETAINER:

- Brush carefully around the wire and the gumline twice daily. Clean between the teeth using a floss threader, superfloss or an interdental aid recommended by your dental team.
- Avoid biting very hard objects with the teeth attached to the wire. Do not pick at or bend the wire.
- If the wire becomes loose, lifts away from a tooth, breaks or feels sharp, contact the practice promptly. A loose section can allow a tooth to move and may irritate your mouth.

WHAT TO EXPECT & WHEN TO CONTACT OUR TEAM

- Mild tightness or pressure can happen when a removable retainer is first worn or after a short break. It should fit fully and comfortably; do not force it if it will not seat properly or causes significant pain.
- Contact the practice promptly if your retainer is lost, cracked, distorted, broken, no longer fits, or if you notice tooth movement.
- Contact us if a bonded retainer feels loose, if you develop persistent soreness or an ulcer, or if cleaning around it becomes difficult.
- Do not wait until your next routine review if you cannot wear your retainer. Teeth can begin to move while a retainer is missing or not fitting.

IF YOUR RETAINER IS BROKEN, LOST OR DAMAGED

Keep any broken pieces and contact the practice promptly for advice. Do not try to repair it with glue or heat. Your clinician will advise whether it can be adjusted, repaired or needs replacing.