



Burkhardt • Pecora orthodontics

CLEAR RETAINERS

Today you have been given a special kind of orthodontic appliance known as a clear retainer. These retainers are made out of 1-mm-thick acrylic (plastic), which is heated and molded to the dental cast made of your teeth. You should wear these retainers on a full-time basis (at least 22 hours a day), or as specifically instructed, except when eating.

One of the advantages of clear retainers is that small adjustments can be made in the position of a few selected teeth. Because teeth are moved into a new position on the dental cast before the retainer is made, the retainers often do not fit comfortably when initially delivered. Usually biting on the retainers for a few minutes allows them to seat into place; however, it may take as long as 24 hours for the appliance to seat properly. This is particularly true if teeth have moved since orthodontic treatment was finished.

The clear retainers should be stored in a retainer box when not being worn. Make sure that the retainers are not left in any area that is accessible to a dog or any other household pet. Pets are attracted to the retainers because of the smell of the saliva. Also, do not wrap the retainers in a napkin—they tend to make their way to the trash can! Clear retainers will melt in high temperatures. Please do not leave them in the sunlight, in a glove box, on a radiator, or put them in hot water for any reason, and don't put them through the dishwasher. Brush them daily with liquid hand soap or dish soap. Do not put your retainer in your pocket, where it could be broken or bent.

The retainers are clear and therefore can discolor if drinking coffee, tea, pop, dark juices or anything that is not a clear liquid. It is recommended that the beverage of choice while wearing the clear retainers is water. You can remove your retainers to drink one of the above mentioned beverages but before replacing the retainer it is recommended that you brush your teeth or at least rinse your mouth with water.

The clear retainers should be removed to eat food and teeth should be brushed before placing the retainers back on the teeth since food left in the teeth can cause decay, decalcification (permanent tooth discoloration) or gum disease. Poor brushing, consuming sugary foods and snacking between meals should be eliminated as they can negatively affect dental health.

Because the clear retainers cover the biting surface of the teeth, they may eventually wear out. Also, several sets of retainers may be used in sequence if minor adjustments in tooth position are desired following the removal of the orthodontic appliances. **There is a charge for replacing retainers.** Should replacement become necessary, new impressions must be taken since the dental cast is damaged in the process of making an appliance. **Be careful to remove both sides of the retainer simultaneously (avoid "rocking" the retainer side-to-side) so it doesn't crack in the middle.**

If you have any difficulties in wearing the clear retainers, or if you notice any cracks in the retainers (which will occur as the retainers fatigue), please contact our office immediately for an appointment.