



Burkhardt • Pecora
orthodontics

HAWLEY OR CIRCUMFERENTIAL RETAINERS

Now that your braces have been removed, you have been given orthodontic retainers. There are two major reasons why retainers are needed following the active phase of orthodontic treatment. Retainers, as the name implies, retain the teeth in the corrected position. When the tooth is moved, the ligaments holding the tooth to the bone are stretched and it takes approximately one year for the relaxation of these fibers to occur. Thus, the full-time wear of retainers for at least six months followed by nightly wear is strongly recommended. Without retainer wear during this time, teeth can move into undesirable positions.

The second reason for wearing retainers is to allow some minor changes in tooth position to occur. By tightening the wires on a retainer, small spaces can be closed and minor changes in tooth position can be achieved.

Generally, retainers are worn on a full-time basis for six months. Then, retainer wear is reduced to nighttime only. This still allows for maintenance of the teeth in their corrected positions. Please wear your retainers as directed and bring them to orthodontic appointments.

Failure to wear the retainers as directed, even for a short period of time, may cause a rapid change. Therefore, it is important that you follow these specific instructions given to you to maintain satisfactory results.

Remove your retainer when eating, brushing, and while playing rough sports. Brush your retainer following each meal or snack. If this is not possible, at least rinse your mouth and wash the retainer with water. Keep your retainer away from heat. Don't leave it on a car dashboard or near a heat register. Do not boil it, microwave it, or place it in a dishwasher. Always place your retainer in its case when it is not in your mouth. NEVER wrap the retainer in a paper towel or napkin or leave it on a cafeteria tray, where it could get thrown into the garbage. Also, do not place your retainer in your pocket, where it could easily be broken or distorted. Keep retainers away from pets, as they are attracted to the smell of the saliva left on the retainers.

There is an additional charge for replacement retainers, as per your financial contract with our office. Should replacement become necessary, additional impressions are always needed as dental casts are damaged in the process of making a retainer and are not reusable.

Please keep this sheet for reference. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (517) 347-0946.