



# Congratulations on Completing Your Orthodontic Treatment!

## Why Retainers Are Important

Your teeth and jaws have been carefully aligned into their ideal positions, and now it's time to maintain those results. Your new retainer plays a critical role in keeping your smile straight and beautiful for years to come.

### PERMANENCE OF CORRECTION

Believe it or not, teeth naturally shift throughout life. Even people with “naturally straight” teeth experience changes in alignment over time. Since you've worked hard to achieve your perfect smile, it's essential to preserve it with consistent retainer wear. Don't let your efforts go to waste — wear your retainer and keep your smile stunning!

### RETAINER WEAR SCHEDULE - FIRST YEAR

#### FIRST 4 MONTHS

- Wear your retainers full-time (20+ hours daily).
- Only remove them for eating and brushing your teeth.

#### AFTER 4 MONTHS

- Switch to nighttime wear only.
- Continue wearing your retainer every night indefinitely, or until your dental professional advises otherwise.

## After One Year

The safest way to preserve your smile is to wear your retainers every night indefinitely. However, some patients ask for alternative options. We may recommend one of the following plans:

- **Regular Nighttime Wear:** Continue wearing your retainers every night.
- **Limited Nighttime Wear:** Wear retainers 3-4 nights per week.
- **Wear as Needed:** Designate one night per week to check the fit of your retainers. If they feel tight or your teeth seem to be shifting, resume nightly wear until the fit normalizes.

### CARING FOR YOUR RETAINER

- **Insertion:** Use your fingers to gently place the retainer in your mouth. Never bite it into position.
- **Cleaning:** Brush your retainer daily and occasionally soak it in denture cleaner to keep it fresh.
- **Avoid Heat:** Keep your retainer away from hot water, sunlight, or other heat sources, as they can warp the shape and affect the fit.
- **No Playing or Chewing:** Avoid flipping or chewing on your retainer, and do not eat or chew gum while wearing it.
- **Safe Storage:** Always store your retainer in its case when not in use. Never wrap it in a napkin, leave it on a plate, or put it in your pocket—it could be lost, damaged, or accidentally thrown away.
- **Keep Away from Pets:** Pets are often drawn to retainers and can chew or hide them.

### LOST OR DAMAGED RETAINERS

If your retainer is lost or damaged, contact our office immediately. Delays in replacing your retainer can lead to unwanted tooth movement, which may require additional treatment to correct.

### REPLACEMENT TIMELINE

Retainers don't last forever and will eventually wear out or become less effective. Depending on the type of retainer and your level of care, they may need to be replaced every 1-5 years.

### COMPLIANCE IS KEY

Wearing your retainer as instructed is the only way to ensure your teeth remain in their correct positions. Teeth can shift back surprisingly quickly without consistent retainer wear, so stay committed to your retainer routine to protect your smile.

### GENERAL DENTAL CARE

Don't forget to schedule a cleaning and checkup with your general dentist after completing your orthodontic treatment. Regular dental visits every six months remain crucial to maintaining your oral health.

