



DO NOT CLEAN RETAINERS WITH TOOTHPASTE, BOILING WATER, BLEACH or ALCOHOL CONTAINING MOUTHWASHES. If your retainer is attached to your teeth, it's important to brush thoroughly after meals and clean under the wire with dental floss at least once a day. Your orthodontist will teach you how to care for your fixed retainer. Whether your retainer is removable or fixed, make sure you see your dentist for a thorough cleaning every six months (or earlier, if recommended).

#### In the long run

Most orthodontists tell their patients to wear their retainer 24/7 for a certain number of months, and then wear it only at night. After a few years, you could reduce that to a few nights per week. But don't stop wearing it completely, or you may get an unpleasant surprise one day when you try to pop it back in, and like your prescription glasses, which sometimes needs to be worn all throughout life, ones bonded (cemented) retainers also sometimes needed to be worn all throughout life. Wearing your retainer as instructed is the key to maintaining the success of your orthodontic treatment. Your orthodontist will determine how long you'll need to wear retainers.

Orthodontic/braces specialists in India receive a 2 to 3 years of specialized education and training at a Dental College, recognised by the Dental Council of India, in addition to the 5 -year basic dental training, training to learn the correct way to align and straighten teeth, control and utilize facial growth, enhance smile esthetics and jaw function. Only those who successfully complete this formal education program may call themselves **"Orthodontists,"** and only those orthodontists can be members of the Indian Orthodontic Society, the national association of qualified orthodontists in India. Selecting a member of the Indian Orthodontic Society for your orthodontic care is your assurance that the doctor is a person most qualified to do the job at hand.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout your treatment or in the future, please consult your orthodontist or visit our website.

# Retainers

## Care & Caution



## For a lifetime of healthy, beautiful smile

After working with your orthodontist, following all the instructions he/she gave you, the teeth have finally reached their most proper position, and it is time for braces to be removed. What follows thereafter ensures that the teeth remain in the same position for the rest of your life. This phase is known as retention. The orthodontist provides you retainers, to retain the teeth in their corrected positions.

### What are retainers?

The clinical needs of the individual case at the end of active treatment, the desires of the patient and the overall compliance that the Orthodontist can expect from the patient for retainer maintenance plays a major role in choosing the type. Retainers, as the name suggests, in orthodontics, are something that retains the teeth in the corrected position achieved at the end of active orthodontic treatment. These are custom made appliances, which hold the teeth in their new position, while the tissues around the individual tooth organizes itself to settle in.

### There are four basic types of retainers:

**Hawley's :** These are made of stainless steel wires in various shapes and acrylic; together, holding the teeth in their corrected positions. While the wire is seen on smiling, the

Retainers...  
for the best smile  
all the time !

acrylic part on the inside may cause speech impediment for a few days. The tongue needs to get used to it. The longer it is worn, while speaking, the faster the tongue adapts to its presence.

**Wraparound :** These, too are made of stainless steel wires and acrylic. However, the wire is designed such that, with the retainers in the mouth, the wires do not come in between the upper and lower teeth when brought together. The wire is seen over the teeth and speech will be an issue for the first few days. Wear it all the time to get over the speech impediment.

**Essix :** These retainers are made of a polymer material. No wires here. The material drapes itself over the entire exposed surface of all the teeth and fits itself over the teeth as a hat over a head. Being transparent, when in the mouth, it is not visible, unlike the stainless steel wire. Also, the material being less than a mm thick, speech is rarely an impediment, if any.

**Fixed :** These retainers are made of very thin but strong wires which are bonded with dental adhesives on the inside surface of select teeth, rendering them invisible. Speech is rarely an issue with these retainers. However, it is extremely important that care is taken to maintain the integrity of these retainers by making some dietary modifications. Additional efforts must be made to ensure the gums and teeth are cleaned thoroughly to minimise any chances of cavities, tartar deposit and gum infection, around the teeth with fixed retainers

## Your role during the retention phase

### 1. Use the retainers as directed

Retainers are effective only if you wear them on the teeth, as per orthodontist's instructions. The world will remain out of focus, if your prescription glasses are not over your eyes. Likewise, without retainers around the teeth, they will surely lose their way. Those with fixed retainers on teeth are advised caution when biting into foodstuff. It is a good idea, not to bite into anything with the front teeth if fixed retainers are bonded (cemented) on the inside.

### 2. Keep the retainers clean

A clean and undamaged retainer will ensure that it functions properly and does not cause oral hygiene problems. A clean, fresh-smelling retainer is certainly a lot more pleasant to put into your mouth! To clean any of the removable retainers, gently scrub all the surfaces with a soft bristled toothbrush and antibacterial soap, and rinse with water thoroughly

