



Sutton Orthodontic Centre
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Patient Information Leaflet **Retainers**

What is a retainer and how important is it to wear?

Retainers are designed to keep your teeth straight and can either be removable or fixed to the teeth. Now that your teeth are straight, if you do not wear your retainer, your teeth are likely to drift towards their original positions. If this happens it may be difficult, if not impossible, to correct.

Will the retainer affect me?

Your speech will be different but will return to normal within a couple of days. You may also find yourself swallowing a lot to begin with. This is quite normal and will quickly pass. If you have a fixed retainer then you will need to take extra care to keep it clean.

How long will I have to wear the retainer and how much?

This will vary depending on what treatment you had but is normally full time for 1-2 weeks following brace removal and every night after that. Your orthodontist will advise you of the appropriate regime for you. You should never cut down the hours you wear the retainer unless you are advised to do so by your orthodontist. The only way to make sure that the teeth will not move following treatment is to wear retainers on a long term basis. REMEMBER, even when we stop seeing you at SOC you should continue wearing the retainers at nights or as directed in order to continue to maintain the result in the long term. Failure to do so could allow your teeth to move again.

Can I eat normally?

You should take a removable retainer out just long enough to eat or drink and rinse your mouth out before putting it straight back in again if you are in the full time wearing phase of retention. You can eat normally but try and avoid sweets, fizzy drinks, etc, to prevent dental decay.

What about toothbrushing?

It is important you brush well three times a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Carry a brush with you for use after lunch. Take the retainer out to clean your teeth. You should also gently brush the retainer and rinse under a cold tap. A proper retainer cleaning solution will also help keep it clean.

Can I remove the retainer?

If the retainer is removable but you have been asked to wear it full time, it should only be removed for eating, cleaning and sports (including swimming). When it is not in your mouth it should be placed in a protective box with some damp cotton wool (which should be changed daily). Do not click the retainer in and out with your tongue as this can cause it to loosen or break. If the retainer can't be worn because it is being repaired, your teeth may move.

How often will I now need an appointment?

You will not need to be seen so often now you have retainers. We will advise you about this.

Do I need to see my normal dentist?

Yes, regularly. In particular, it's a good idea to visit your regular dentist now that you are wearing retainers since it will be easier to check your teeth for decay. This is particularly so if your previous brace was fixed to your teeth.

What do I do if I play contact sports?

You should obtain a new gumshield now you are in retention.

What do I do if I lose my retainers or they get broken?

Ring up for an appointment as soon as is reasonably possible. Do not wait for your next routine appointment as your teeth may move whilst not wearing your retainers.