



Long Term Retention

it all starts with a smile...

Retention is an extremely important part of orthodontic treatment. World literature clearly shows that virtually all orthodontic treatments relapse following treatment. This is based on the work of Robert Little of the United States. The type of retainer can be discussed at length during the active orthodontic treatment and a final decision made prior to active treatment completion.

Removable Retainers

Removable retainers can either be a plastic plate with wires clipped in at the back or alternatively, a see-through splint type which is placed over the surface of the teeth. The advantages of the removable retainers are that they are worn all the time, but are taken out for eating and cleaning. They are also far less likely to break, and if they do, then they are extremely easy to replace. All the patient needs to do is contact the practice to arrange an appointment so that a new impression can be taken and retainers can be remade. Obviously cleaning is much easier with an appliance that is removed. Initially, the retainers are worn full time, day and night, for the first three months (only taken out for eating and cleaning), then night times only on a long term permanent basis. You will be provided with three sets of removable retainers so that you have replacements should you need them.

Fixed Bonded Retainers

The bonded retainers are attached to the back of the anterior teeth and left indefinitely. These retainers consist of a wire adapted to the contours on the inner side of the front teeth and attached by means of tooth coloured cement. The main advantage of bonded retainers are that they are permanently fixed to the teeth. However, oral hygiene is an extreme worry with bonded retainers. If good oral hygiene is not maintained at the highest level there is always the possibility and danger of de-calcification or damage to the enamel around the bonded retainer. The daily use fluoride mouth rinse and tooth paste is highly recommended. Furthermore, bonded retainers do have a tendency to break, particularly in the upper jaw. The patient may not be aware that the retainer has broken as it is attached to six anterior teeth. Two attachments may break leaving it still firmly attached to the main four teeth. The patient will then only be aware that their bonded retainer has broken when the teeth start to move and relapse. Bonded retainers are worn on a permanent basis.

Good Oral Health and Hygiene Maintenance

It is very important that all patients undertaking orthodontics continue to see their own dentist for regular dental check ups and oral hygiene maintenance with their dentist or hygienist, as appropriate.

Please remember that permanent retention is absolutely mandatory in your treatment, as your teeth will tend to relapse back to their original position.

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