



## SOUTHEAST ORTHODONTICS

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*Creating Smiles for Adults and Children*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF RETAINERS

The day that has been anxiously awaited has arrived. The orthodontic appliances have been removed and in their place we have fitted a removable retainer, which in many ways is more important than the fixed appliances. Some patients may have a bonded retainer placed first in order to help with retention. It is the retainer which will “hold” the teeth in their new position much like a cast is used on a broken arm or leg. Retainers should be worn for an average of 12 hours per day.

The responsibility for wearing the retainer falls squarely upon the patient. Phase I of retention is to wear the retainer anytime you are in your house, unless eating, drinking, or brushing your teeth. This Phase I period lasts for approximately 12 months. Phase II of retention allows for retainer wear mainly at night during sleep time. We recommend that the retainers be worn until the wisdom teeth grow into the mouth, or the wisdom teeth have been removed. Failure to wear the retainers during this period may result in some relapse of the teeth toward their former positions. When this occurs the first indication will be that the retainer no longer fits properly or feels “tight” or “loose”. Phase III of retention is indefinite retainer wear. This is the best way to insure long-term stability of the teeth. Unfortunately, we cannot predict whose teeth will shift if retainers are not continually maintained.

At the conclusion of all orthodontic therapy, we strongly recommend a visit to your family dentist for a thorough examination, updated x-rays, and cleaning. The removal of the fixed appliances will permit your dentist to re-examine the areas between the teeth which have been covered by the orthodontic bands and braces.

The following are some tips on retainer care and wear:

1. The patient should remove the retainer when eating, drinking liquids, brushing, flossing, or during any activities. Place retainer in the case if not wearing.
2. Brush your retainer just as you do your teeth, after each meal and before it is replaced in the mouth; toothpaste is not necessary.
3. As regards to “clear” retainers; brush the inside gently without toothpaste and rinse thoroughly in cool water only before replacing in the mouth.
4. If the retainer is irritating, broken, lost, or not fitting, call our office immediately.
5. Dogs and cats, for some reason enjoy chewing on retainers, so please keep your retainers out of your pet’s hunting range!

We will continue to follow your progress during retention for the first year of retainer wear. The retention appointments for this year are included in the original fee for the orthodontic therapy. After this year of retention care, there will be an office visit charge for any further requested appointments. If the doctor feels longer than one year of observation is necessary, there will be no charge at his discretion.

To replace a retainer requires new impressions, new appliance fabrication, and further appointments. Such replacement will cost an additional \$175 per Hawley retainer (metal bar across front teeth), or \$125 for clear retainers. If relapse or movement of the teeth has occurred due to lack of cooperation or unexpected growth, orthodontic appliances or several adjustments of newly constructed retainers, may need to be used again to correct the teeth at an additional fee to be determined by the doctor. Phase I retention visits were included in the original braces fee. Phase II and Phase III retention visits are done on a as need basis. If you wish to be seen during this time period, there will be a \$50 dollar office visit charge. Should you have any questions, **please call our office.**

