

Young Smiles Family Dentistry

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Retainer Home-Care Instructions

Congratulations on completing your orthodontic treatment!

Now that you've taken an important step toward improving your smile, it is important to maintain your results by wearing and caring for your retainer properly.

Purpose of Your Retainer

Retainers help keep your teeth in their corrected position. Teeth can naturally shift over time, especially after orthodontic treatment. Wearing your retainer as instructed is the best way to protect your smile and prevent unwanted movement.

Wearing Your Retainer

- Wear your retainer exactly **as directed** by your dentist or orthodontic provider.
- Always place the retainer on **clean teeth**.
- Gently place and remove your retainer using your fingers, **avoid biting** the retainer into place.
- If the retainer does not fully seat, feels painful, or seems too tight, do not force it. Call our office.

Eating and Drinking Tips

- Remove your retainer **before eating**.
- Do not chew food while wearing your retainer.
- You may drink cool or lukewarm water.
- Avoid hot liquids, coffee, tea, soda, juice, sports drinks, and sugary or acidic drinks.
- **Hot liquids can warp** the retainer.

Cleaning Your Retainer

Keeping your retainer clean is very important. Retainers can collect plaque, bacteria, odor, and stains if they are not cleaned properly.

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- Clean your retainer **every day with cool or lukewarm water** and a soft toothbrush.
- Rinse the retainer well before placing it back in your mouth.
- Do not use hot water, boiling water, bleach, alcohol-based mouthwash, abrasive toothpaste, whitening products, or harsh cleaning agents.
- Brush and floss your teeth **before** wearing your retainer, especially at night.
- Food and plaque trapped under the retainer can increase the risk of cavities, gum inflammation, and bad breath.

Retainer Care Tips

When traveling, eating, or removing your retainer temporarily, **always place it in its case** to keep from losing it. Never place it on a napkin or tissue.

- Always keep your retainer in its protective case when it is not in your mouth.
- **Keep it away from** pets, children, heat, direct sunlight, hot cars, and hot water.
- Never try to bend, adjust, or repair your retainer yourself.

When to Contact the Office

- Call our office as soon as possible if your retainer is **lost, broken, cracked, warped, loose, painful, or does not fit properly.**
- Teeth can shift quickly when a retainer is not worn.
- Bring your retainer to regular dental visits so we can evaluate its fit and condition.