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## INSTRUCTIONS

# removable retainer

## CONGRATULATIONS!

You have finally reached the point at which your braces are off, your teeth are straight and beautiful, and your smile and bite are things you can truly be proud of. There is a catch to all of this, you know! In order to keep your teeth straight and beautiful, you now need to wear retainers. Here are a few rules that apply to the wearing and caring of your retainers:

1. At first, your retainer will probably feel very large in your mouth, and it may feel like you'll NEVER get used to it. **BE PATIENT!** Just like you thought that you'd never get used to your braces (but you did), you'll get used to your retainers. **It is absolutely critical that you wear them EXACTLY as recommended.**
2. Your mouth will produce lots of extra saliva for the first few days. Don't worry, this will go away soon.
3. You will need to wear your retainer full time (except for eating and brushing) for the first 6 weeks. Your body is rebuilding the original strength of the bone around the roots of your teeth, and the retainers hold them straight while this is going on. After this initial period, you will be allowed to taper down to just while you sleep.
4. Your retainer will build up a layer of plaque just like your teeth do, and it will need to be brushed as thoroughly as your teeth are. We recommend brushing your retainer very thoroughly twice a day, just as you do your teeth. If you do this, your retainer will stay looking (and smelling!) like new. You may occasionally soak it in 'Retainer Brite' or 'Polident for Partial Dentures' for a deep cleaning. If you have a clear retainer, clean with a 50/50 mixture of hydrogen peroxide and water.
5. Your retainer was made especially for you and is very fragile. Whenever you take it out, be SURE you put it in its case. Many retainers have been thrown away after being wrapped up in a paper towel.
6. Do not chew gum or sticky food while wearing your retainer.
7. Avoid flipping (or playing with) your retainer with your tongue.
8. Dogs love to chew on retainers...please keep it away from your pets.
9. Your retainer is subject to being warped by the hot Texas sun. Avoid leaving it in a car or any other hot place so that it isn't permanently deformed. Also avoid cleaning it with hot water.
10. If your retainer ever bends, breaks, gets lost, or doesn't seem to fit, PLEASE call our office immediately.
11. Always bring your retainer to your appointments.
12. Current Orthodontic research indicates that regardless of how your teeth were when you started treatment, how you were treated, or how old you were when you started...teeth continue to shift throughout your lifetime, it all shifts. The only way to assure that your teeth stay straight and beautiful is to continue wearing your retainers on a nightly basis forever. As long as you can keep your retainer fitting without being too tight, your teeth are staying put. We have done everything we could to assure the best long term stability of your teeth, but it is your responsibility to keep them straight by following our advice regarding your retainers.