

## ESSIX RETAINERS

Congratulations on finishing your braces! You are now entering into a new phase of treatment- the retainer phase. **The retainer phase of treatment is just as important as the braces and lasts a lifetime even though we continue to see you for only a year after the braces are removed. Your cooperation is required to maintain the position of the teeth at the time of braces removal.** Relapse (movement of the teeth into a crooked position, or an alteration of the way of the upper and lower teeth meet each other) can occur if the guidelines listed below are not followed by the patient. Also, the way a patient grows after removal of the braces can cause bite problems (“underbite”, “openbite”) to relapse even with retainers. Habits such as tongue thrusting and finger sucking will also cause relapse.

An **Essix retainer** is a removable custom-made clear plastic retainer used to hold the teeth in the corrected position after removal of the braces. It covers the teeth and a small portion of the gums. In most patients the gums are swollen due to gingivitis from poor oral hygiene or irritation from the braces/adhesives at the time the braces are removed. Impressions made while the gums are swollen will result in retainers that are fitted to the swollen gums. Within 1-2 weeks after the braces are removed, the gums will heal and shrink (*if* proper oral hygiene is maintained) and the retainers may feel loose. Dr. Durrett will determine if a new retainer is necessary.

**There is a fee for replacement retainers. Any dental work, such as fillings or crowns, may cause the retainer to not fit requiring replacement. The Essix material may crack, wear down or discolor over time requiring replacement. Properly placing/removing retainers, and cleaning of retainers will minimize damage.**

### **How often to wear your retainers:**

- 6 months: wear your retainers all the time (minimum of 22 hours) except when eating or cleaning the retainers
- 6-12 months: wear your retainers for 12 consecutive hours/day, usually best at night-time.
- >12 months: wear your retainers regularly, preferably every night while you sleep.
- As long as your retainers do not feel tight, the teeth have not moved. If the retainers feel tight, the teeth are beginning to move into a crooked position. This means you should increase the time you wear your retainers until the retainers no longer feel tight.
- As we age, our bodies (including the teeth) change. The teeth may gradually shift over the years, even if you had braces. For this reason, it is important for you to take care of your retainers and continue to wear your retainers for the rest of your life.
- These are general guidelines that may be altered on an individual basis at the discretion of Dr. Durrett. Changes to the above guidelines, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

### **When not to wear your retainers:**

- **Eating:** Eating with your retainers will cause discoloration and excessive wear of the retainers. Dr. Durrett also advises that you brush after eating prior to placement of the retainers to prevent food/plaque buildup on the retainers.
- **Drinking:** Water is the only drink allowed with the retainers in place. Beverages such as soda, tea, coffee, etc. will cause discoloration of the clear essix retainers and may cause tooth decay.
- **Brushing/flossing:** You must remove your retainer to brush and floss your teeth.
- **Cleaning:** Your retainers will last longer if you take care of them. We recommend: 1) **BRUSH RETAINERS DAILY** with mild soap and water, **AND** 2) **SOAK WEEKLY** in one of the following: **Steraligner** (available for purchase from our office), **Efferdent** (soak with room temperature water for 15 mins then rinse, available at grocery/drug stores), or **white vinegar**. After soaking, scrub the retainer with a toothbrush. **Do not boil** your retainers or place them in any household cleaners.

### **Discomfort:**

- If the edge of the retainer feels sharp and is causing a sore on the gums or cheeks, lightly and carefully use an emery board (file) to smooth the area. You may also schedule an appointment with Dr. Durrett to evaluate the problem.

### **Follow-up visits will be scheduled at the following intervals:**

1. 2 months after brace removal
2. 3 months after 1<sup>st</sup> retainer check-up appointment
3. 6 months after 2<sup>nd</sup> retainer check-up appointment

\*Scheduled visits may vary depending on individual needs

### **CAUTION:**

- **When you remove your retainers, always place them in the retainer case provided by Dr. Durrett. NEVER wrap your retainers in a paper towel before you eat...they will look like trash and will be thrown away!**
- **Keep your retainer away from all pets...they love to chew on them!!!**
- **Never leave your retainers in a hot environment (such as a car)...this may cause the retainer to warp, changing the shape of the retainer, and therefore, your retainers will not fit.**
- **Do not “flip” your retainer “in and out” with your tongue; this may weaken/break the retainer.**

**Any repairs or replacements for broken or lost retainer (“retainers”) will incur additional charges at fees applicable at that time. Patients will be seen for up to 3 FREE visits during the first 12 month(s) of the retention time. Any “free” appointments missed, not scheduled or otherwise unused during the first 12 month(s) of retention time are “lost” and not carried into the following months. After the number of “free” visits allowed or after the first 12 month(s) following the end of the “active” treatment, whichever occurs first, all appointments to check the patient’s condition or adjust retainers incur a post-treatment CHECK-UP FEE.**

I have read and understand the above-described directions.

Patient/Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_