

HAWLEY 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.

A **Hawley retainer** is a removable custom-made metal and plastic retainer used to hold the teeth in the corrected position after removal of the braces. The retainer may need to be replaced every 5-10 years, or sooner if the patient does not take care of the retainer.

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 Hawley 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 except when eating or cleaning the retainers
- 6-12 months: wear your retainers for 12 consecutive hours/day
- >12 months: wear your retainers regularly, preferably every night while you sleep.
- >24 months: wear your retainers a couple of times during the week.
- 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 check if your retainers fit 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 may cause plaque buildup, discoloration and breakage of the retainers. Dr. Durrett also advises that you brush after eating and prior to placement of the retainers to prevent food and plaque buildup on the retainers.
- **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.
- **Certain sports:** Take out your retainers when playing rough sports, such as football, basketball, wrestling, etc.

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

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

*Scheduled visits may vary depending on individual needs

Discomfort:

- Your teeth may become sore for the first few days after you wear a new retainer. Continue to wear the retainers as prescribed.
- Excess pressure on the gums by the plastic may cause a sore on the gums. Call for an appointment if the problem continues for more than 2 weeks.

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! NEVER place them in your pocket without it being in its case. The retainers are fragile!**
- **If the wire becomes bent, do not wear it and do not try to fix it yourself...call Dr. Durrett immediately.**
- **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 _____