

# Retainer



A retainer is an orthodontic appliance that must be worn after we remove your braces. There are two types of retainers: fixed and removable. Once we remove your braces, your teeth will want to shift naturally due to muscle pressure. It is crucial that you

wear your retainer to prevent your teeth from moving.

## Retainer Instructions

Wearing your retainer is a very important phase of the total treatment process. When your braces come off, the teeth are mildly loose. They need time to “firm up” in the bone until they become stable.

## How Often Should I Wear My Retainer & How Should it Fit?

We will evaluate your retainer fit and wear schedule for the next 12 months. Please wear your retainer as described:

### FOR THE FIRST 6 WEEKS:

Wear the retainer **all the time 24/7**. Take it out only to eat and brush.

### AT WEEK 7 UNTIL 6 MONTHS AFTER THE BRACES COME OFF:

Wear the retainer only at bedtime. Starting date for bedtime only:

### AT THE 6 MONTH MARK:

You may start to try to wear the retainer at bedtime, every other night:

- If the retainer feels tight when you wear it at night, you’re not ready to go to an every-other-night schedule. Continue wearing the retainer every night.
- Over time, if the retainer begins to feel passive (not tight) when inserting it, you may start wearing it every other night.

### AT THE 1 YEAR MARK:

As long as your retainer inserts smoothly (without resistance), you can switch to wearing your retainer one overnight per week. However, if it feels tight or has resistance, you must wear it several nights per week. You must wear your retainer for the rest of your life (at least once per week at night). If you don’t, your teeth will shift back to their original position over time.

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## How Do I Clean My Retainer?

**REMOVABLE RETAINERS:** Clean your retainer at least once a day to keep it fresh and free from bacteria and tartar build up. Brush your retainer with a soft toothbrush when you brush your teeth, using luke warm (not hot) water and toothpaste. Do not place in boiling water or in the dishwasher. Always store your retainer in its case. You can use retainer cleaning tablets to help with the cleaning process.

**FIXED RETAINERS:** The main problem with a fixed retainer is inadequate tooth brushing. As long as you brush well and also use a fluoride mouthwash, you are unlikely to have this problem. Do not touch or pick at your fixed retainer. Do not use a toothpick to clean around it. You may also use a special kind of floss called Superfloss to clean in between your teeth.

## What Should I Do if I Lose or Break My Retainer?

You have invested a lot of time, money and emotion into your new smile. Teeth move as a part of their normal use, and the retainer is the only template of your straight smile. **If you lose or break your retainer, call our office immediately to have it repaired or replaced.**

## REMEMBER:

**Always bring your retainer with you to your retainer check appointments! We need to check its fit and sometimes adjust them.**

## What if My Fixed Retainer Breaks or Comes Unglued?

If you are abusive or dislodge the retainer wire, it will cost \$25/tooth to rebond. If the wire comes loose completely, save the wire and call us immediately. It can be rebonded if we do it right away. If you wait too long, it will no longer fit and we will have to make a new one (charge applies).

### \*FEES FOR RETAINER REPLACEMENT/REPAIR

Fees are for Comella Orthodontics patients only.

<b>\$75</b>	Replace a clear retainer
<b>\$250</b>	Replace a retainer with a hard plastic palate and metal wire across teeth
<b>\$100</b>	Repair a Hawley retainer
<b>*\$25 per tooth</b>	Replace any attachment of a fixed retainer after 1 year from removal date.

\*From the time the fixed retainer is placed to the 1 year mark from which your braces were removed, there is no fee to replace a single bonding unless it is due to patient irresponsibility.