

# After Treatment

## Retention and finishing touches

At the end of all orthodontic treatment is the retention phase. There is a natural tendency for teeth to move once treatment has finished. To prevent this relapse occurring, it is extremely important to understand what to do when your braces are removed. This is critical in ensuring that your teeth will look as good in years to come as they do on the day your braces are removed.

A retention program is individually tailored for each patient, but usually comprises removable clear retainers for night time use with or without fixed retainer wires, behind the front teeth. These retention appliances are designed to hold the teeth in place once braces are removed and are very simple to wear and maintain.

### Bonded Lingual Wire

A bonded lingual retainer is a very fine piece of wire attached to the inside surface of the upper and/or lower front teeth. This wire is not visible and reduces the risk of movement and relapse in the tooth position. The wire is usually placed immediately following removal of braces and can feel slightly bulky to the tongue for the first day or so. Care should be taken when cleaning bonding retainers as well as biting into hard foods with the front teeth as this has the potential to dislodge the wire from its position. We generally advise that these wires are left in place indefinitely or until such time they need removal for maintenance. It is essential to continue to have the wires checked by a dental professional for as long as they are in place (we will do this for the first 1 or 2 years).

### Removable 'Essix' Retainers

Removable retainers are made of a clear, thin plastic material that is very discreet. For the first three weeks after your braces have been removed the removable retainers may need to be worn 24 hours a day (removed only for eating and cleaning). Following this, your retainer should be worn at night indefinitely on a reducing schedule that we will explain to you.

### Finishing Touches

Orthodontics is an excellent way of straightening teeth as well as improving the smile and bite. Sometimes however, finishing touches are necessary to improve the shape or colour of the teeth and create the best possible outcome.

The simplest of these techniques is to adjust and smooth any rough or uneven enamel edges. If this is not sufficient then enamel bonding (tooth coloured fillings) can be used to replace any worn or chipped areas. Tooth whitening remains a popular choice with patients at the end of treatment and can be combined with dental bonding for the most refined outcome.

Feel free to talk to us or your family dentist about these options so that we can guide you and make the appropriate arrangements.

### Restorative Treatment

Following removal of their appliances some patients will go on to have restorative treatment such as tooth whitening, crowns, bridges, veneers or implants. If such a restorative phase is required or requested we will be delighted to work with a dentist of your choice to ensure the best possible outcome. Please ask for more details about getting the best from joint care.

