INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND PARENTS OR CARERS

Your **removable retainers**

How to wear them and look after them

PORTADOWN ORTHODONTICS

What are **removable retainers?**

Removable retainers (also called Essix retainers) are thin, see-through plastic covers that fit closely over your teeth. You may have one for your upper teeth, your lower teeth or both.



Why **retainers matter**

After a brace comes off, your teeth try to move back. As you get older, the shape of your face and the bone around your teeth also change, so **teeth shift naturally** – around 1 to 2 mm every 10 to 20 years, always to a worse position.

Wearing your retainers **stops this shifting**. It also helps protect your teeth from wear if you grind them at night.

To keep your teeth straight, wear your retainers for life. If you stop, your teeth are likely to move. If we did your original braces, for us to treat you again to straighten your teeth, it will cost you **£1,245 per arch** (**£2,490** for upper and lower); otherwise, our standard private prices apply. **The health service (NHS) never pays for a second course of treatment.**

Wearing **your retainers**

- **Wear them every night while you sleep** – about 8 to 10 hours.
- You do not need to wear them in the day, unless we tell you to.
- At first they may feel tight and you may lisp slightly. This usually settles within a few days.
- If you miss a night and they feel tight, wear them more until they feel comfortable, and let us know.

Eating **and drinking**

- **Take them out in the morning.** Never eat with them in.
- **Take them out when you drink.** Drinks can get trapped underneath – hot drinks can bend the plastic and sugary drinks cause tooth decay.

Keeping **them clean**

- Brush your teeth before you put your retainers in.
- Brush your retainers gently with a soft toothbrush and cool water.
- **Do not use hot water** – it can bend the plastic so they no longer fit.
- Keep seeing your regular dentist for check-ups.

Looking after **your retainers**

- When they are out of your mouth, **keep them in their case**. Never wrap them in a tissue – they are easily thrown away.
- Keep them away from pets.
- Retainers do not last forever and may need replacing over time.

Replacement **retainers**

- A replacement retainer costs **£105** (**£210** for upper and lower). Multi-buy: 2 sets £380, 3 sets £510.
- Your regular dentist may also be able to make them. The cost varies between dentists.

- **Need a replacement?** Use the Lost or broken retainer form at **portadownorthodontics.co.uk/lost-retainer.html** (Contact us > Lost or broken retainer) and our admin team will get in touch. For **private orthodontic treatment** because your teeth have moved, contact our practice.

Problems and **what to do**

For any problem below: contact us or your regular dentist **straight away**. Your teeth can move quickly. Bring your retainer to your appointment with us or your regular dentist so it can be checked.

Problem	What to do
Cracked retainer	Keep wearing it unless a sharp edge hurts your mouth.
Lost retainer	Use the Lost or broken retainer form on our website, or contact your regular dentist, straight away. Your teeth can move quickly without a retainer. There will be a charge for a replacement retainer, either with us or with your regular dentist.
Worn, split or sharp retainer	A retainer that is worn through or has a split or sharp edge needs replacing.
Retainer does not fit	This is often because it has not been worn enough, or you have taken a few nights off from wearing it. Chewies (from our practice or online) can help it sit fully over your teeth. If you have not worn it within the last week, or it was not fitting well, a replacement will need a new scan. A new retainer will not move your teeth back to their straight position, but it will stop them getting worse.

Your **daily routine**

- **At night:** brush your teeth, then put your retainers in.
- **In the morning:** take them out, brush them gently with cool water and put them in their case.
- **Going away?** Take your retainers and case with you, even for one night.

Long-term **care**

After you finish brace treatment and get your retainers, you will be **discharged back to your dentist**. Your dentist will check your retainers as part of your general dental appointments.

Questions people **often ask**

Will my teeth stay perfectly straight? Wearing your retainers every night keeps them as straight as possible. Small natural changes can still happen over many years.

I grind my teeth. Does that matter? Grinding can wear retainers out faster. Check them for holes or splits and contact us or your dentist if you see any.

Do I really need them for life? Yes. Teeth keep moving slowly throughout life, so wearing your retainers every night is the only way to keep them straight.

My retainer looks cloudy. Is that a problem? Retainers can become cloudy over time. Gentle brushing with cool water helps keep them clear. Replace it if it is worn or no longer fits well.

Questions **or problems?**

Clinic name	Heathwood House	**Phone**	028 3870 2623
Email	heathwoodhouse@djmaguiredentists.co.uk		
Opening hours	Mon–Thu 8am–5pm; Fri 8am–4pm (usually closed 1–2pm)		

Please have your name and date of birth ready when you contact us.