Looking after your Clear Plastic Retainers

A clear plastic retainer has been custom made to fit your teeth. As these are custom made, the fit of the retainers may be snug or tight. However, please do not be concerned if your retainer is not tight. Your retainers are designed to last 18 to 24 months and will do so if they are looked after properly.

How to put in and take out your retainers
It is very important to handle your retainers carefully when putting them in and taking them out, as these are the times when they are most likely to be damaged.

You should only seat your retainers in the mouth using your fingers. To avoid damage, never use your tongue and/or teeth to line them up or push them into place. Note: It is advisable to clean your teeth before putting in your retainers.

To prevent over-flexing your retainers, they should always be removed at the back first with both sides removed at the same time - this is best achieved using your fingernails hooked over the edge of the retainer and pushing them away from the teeth. If they are then tight on the front teeth, release them from there. Do not keep pushing from the back as this may lead to over-flexing at the front.

When not in the mouth, the retainers should be placed in a retainer box – these are available from reception.

Cleaning your retainers
To avoid damage to the retainers, this type of retainer should not be brushed. To clean the retainer, rinse or soak with lukewarm water or Retainer Brite solution only. Retainer Brite should be used at least 2-3 times a week to disinfect the retainers and can be purchased from reception.

The retainers should be rinsed regularly before and after wearing them to remove saliva and debris. If this is not done and food or plaque is allowed to dry on the retainers, it is not easily removed even with vigorous cleaning.

Wearing your retainers
You should wear the retainers as advised by your orthodontist. This will ensure the teeth are held straight during this unstable time while the gums and bone are healing. After this period, you will be advised by the orthodontist when to continue wearing your retainers.

Replacement retainers
If a crack or split appears at the edge of the retainers it is important to let us know as it may need replacing. However if you have cracking on the “chewing surface” there is nothing to be concerned about. If you break the retainer or are unable to wear it for any reason, please contact the practice immediately. Your teeth will move if the retainer is left out.

Retainers are expensive. If they are lost, or damaged beyond repair, you will have to pay for replacements. You will also have to pay for replacements if your teeth have moved because of insufficient wear.