



BRENT HOGGAN ORTHODONTICS

## CLEAR RETAINERS

**Purpose:** Retainers prevent shifting of the teeth after braces have been removed. This tendency for teeth to shift is greatest right after removing the braces, but continues to a lesser degree throughout life.

**Description:** Clear retainers are made of a plastic that is vacuum-formed to a model of your teeth. They are usually placed the same day the braces are removed. They are typically designed to hold the teeth in their exact position, though they can be modified slightly for minor tooth movement, when needed.

**When to Wear Them:** Clear retainers are usually worn full-time, day and night, for the first 4 to 6 weeks after the braces are removed. Often, at your next appointment, the wire and acrylic retainers (called Hawley retainers) will be delivered. For patients who only wish to wear the clear retainers, we would expect them to last at least 1 year, but new ones will need to be made periodically for a nominal replacement cost.

**When NOT to Wear Them:** Clear retainers must be removed for eating, gum chewing, brushing, and playing sports. When they are removed, they should always be placed in the retainer case you were given with the retainers.

**Care Instructions:** Clear retainers should be rinsed with water whenever they are removed from the mouth during the day. In addition, if they are developing any build up or unpleasant odor, they may be soaked in a clear aligner cleanser (such as Crest Aligner Care cleaning tablets) or a denture cleanser (such as Efferdent or Polident) as often as needed. Importantly, they should never be boiled or washed in a dishwasher, because high temperatures will distort them significantly.

**Possible Problems:** The most common problem patients have with retainers is having them chewed up by their dogs, so please keep them out of reach of your dog. Other common problems include losing them or breaking them. To avoid these problems, make sure they are placed in their case when not in the mouth. As mentioned above, exposure to high heat will distort the retainers. This can even occur if they are left in the car on a hot day. Finally, patients who grind or clench their teeth while wearing the retainers will cause cracks, tears, and holes to develop in the retainers. This often occurs at night, and can be an indication that a custom nightguard should be made to take the place of the retainer. If you experience any of the problems listed above, please contact our office immediately so the problem can be resolved.

**Replacement Cost:** If the retainers are lost or broken, a new set of impressions will be needed, and there will be a replacement cost for the new retainers.

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