

## THE WEAR AND CARE OF YOUR INVISIBLE RETAINERS

Now that you no longer have braces on your teeth, wearing your retainers properly, and caring for the retainers, is important to your orthodontic treatment. In order to maintain the alignment of your teeth and the correction of your bite, you must follow these guidelines:

### 1) WEARING THE RETAINERS

You must wear your retainers as instructed. Failing to wear the retainers properly will allow your teeth to return to the positions they were in before you began your orthodontic treatment. This change can occur extremely quickly, often beginning within 2-3 days. Typically, a person must wear their retainers every day for 9 hours. This means that you must have the retainers in place every night, when you are sleeping. If you sleep for less than 9 hours, you should insert the retainers before bedtime, so that you will have worn them for 9 hours when you wake. It is not necessary to wear your retainers during the day. To insert the retainers, you should observe the following instructions:

- a) place the upper retainer against the roof of your mouth, with the front teeth in the groove of plastic
- b) press with your fingers against the biting surfaces of your back teeth, until the retainer snaps into place
- c) place the lower retainer against your lower teeth, with the front teeth in the groove of plastic
- d) press with your fingers against the biting surfaces of your back teeth, until the retainer snaps into place

To remove the retainers, you should observe the following instructions:

- a) hook the nails of your index fingers on the plastic at the back of the upper retainer, on either side
- b) gently pry the plastic down until the retainer is loose, and remove
- c) hook the nails of your thumbs on the plastic at the back of the lower retainer, on either side
- d) gently pry the plastic up until the retainer is loose, and remove

It may require considerable force to insert and remove the retainers, although the amount of pressure will become less as you become familiar with wearing the retainers. If mishandled, the retainers may become damaged and may not hold your teeth in proper position. Please follow these important guidelines:

- a) **NEVER** bite the retainers into place, as this will crack the plastic
- b) **NEVER** boil the retainers to clean them, or allow them to be heated in any way
- c) **NEVER** allow any one to handle your retainers, and keep them away from children and pets
- d) **ALWAYS** have the retainers in your mouth or in the protective box
- e) **ALWAYS** keep the retainers **completely** clean
- f) **ALWAYS** bring your retainers with you to each appointment.

### 2) CARING FOR THE RETAINERS

Aside from wearing and handling them properly, the retainers require little attention. It is important to prevent the retainers from drying completely, so you should store your retainers in water, in a small plastic container with an air-tight lid. You must clean them with your toothbrush and toothpaste each night before you go to sleep, and again when you wake up in the morning. You can soak your retainers in a denture cleaning solution (available at any pharmacy) to keep them clean, but do not soak them more often than twice a month. Soaking the retainers in denture cleaning solution is **not** a substitute for daily brushing. If the retainers become too dirty, they will not fit properly. The retainers should only be in one of two places - in your mouth or in the container. If you lose or damage your retainers, please **CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY**. Even if the office is closed, you can leave a message.

Our goal is to keep your teeth well aligned, and we are always available to help you. Please call the office if you have any questions or concerns.