

Orthodontic Retention

Congratulations on completing your orthodontic journey. Our practice philosophy is to ensure that your hard work, commitment and pleasing result is maintained long-term. The only way that we can ensure a stable orthodontic outcome is with life-long retention.

Immediately after orthodontic treatment has completed the teeth are vulnerable to movement. This is because the bone around the teeth has expanded and requires time to condense and stabilise after treatment. This is the reason why fixed and removable retainers will be provided and are so important!

The orthodontic literature shows that a vast majority of patients will suffer from tooth movement after orthodontic treatment, which is called relapse. Unfortunately, there is no way to predict which patients are more susceptible to relapse than others.

Some of the reasons for relapse after orthodontic treatment are as follows:

1. The ligaments and fibers around the teeth that have been stretched during treatment have a retractive effect
2. The natural forward movement of the teeth throughout life causes crowding, irrespective of orthodontic treatment
3. Life-long changes in lip, cheek and tongue pressure will have an effect on the resting tooth position

Retainers are a custom made long-term solution to prevent tooth movement, stabilise the bite and prevent tooth wear during nocturnal clenching and grinding.

The fixed retainers are stainless steel wires that are bonded behind the teeth and remain in the mouth permanently, they can be in place for many years without harm. Normal brushing and flossing is the only maintenance required around the retainer due to its convenient zig-zag shape. It should be stressed that the bonding adhesive does not possess unlimited strength, on this basis exceptionally hard or sticky foods should be avoided in this region. The retainers should be regularly checked and cleaned by your dentist.

The removable retainer is a plastic plate worn during sleep hours only. It should be cleaned after wear with your toothbrush and toothpaste under COLD water only (hot or boiling water will distort the plate). Once cleaned the retainer should be kept in the case provided and out of reach of pets and young family members. Some patients may cause excessive wear to the plastic retainer through clenching and grinding. If this occurs Dr Piller may recommend a more robust retainer called a splint.

Both the fixed & removable retainers will require maintenance, repair or replacement over time which will incur a cost.

It is important to contact our office asap should you notice any change, difference in feeling, breakage or loss to either your fixed or removable retainers. If the integrity of your retainer is compromised this can result in tooth movement.

Finally, Dr Piller and the team at The Smile Suite hope that you have enjoyed your treatment journey and that you are pleased with the result. The best way that you can thank us is by recommending us to your family and friends.