

# POND SQUARE DENTAL

## INFORMATIONAL LEAFLETS

### Got Retainers? Here's What You Need to Know

#### What are retainers?

After your orthodontic treatment is complete, you'll need to wear retainers to help maintain your new smile. These can be either removable or fixed in place. Your orthodontist will recommend the most suitable type for you. Retainers work by holding your teeth in their corrected positions, so it's essential to wear them exactly as advised.

#### What should I expect from a removable retainer?

Initially, you might notice a slight change in how you speak. This is normal and usually improves within a few days. Practicing by reading aloud can help speed this up. You may also find that you produce more saliva at first, but this should settle down quickly.

#### How does a fixed retainer affect daily life?

Fixed retainers require careful cleaning, as food and plaque can build up around them. Your orthodontist will show you the best way to keep them clean and ensure your oral hygiene stays on track.

#### Why is wearing a retainer so important?

Retainers are just as vital as your braces were. Once your teeth are straight, wearing your retainer as directed helps prevent them from shifting back.

#### How long do I need to wear retainers?

To keep your teeth in their new position, you'll need to wear retainers part-time for life. Generally, this means every night for the first year, then reducing gradually to a few nights a week long term. Your orthodontist will provide personalised guidance. If you stop wearing them, your teeth are likely to shift due to natural changes that occur with age.

### LOVE YOUR SMILE

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Can I take my retainer out?

If your retainer is removable, yes—but only when necessary. Unless told otherwise, remove it for eating, brushing, contact sports, and swimming. Always store it in a protective case when not in use. Avoid flicking it in and out with your tongue, as this can cause damage or affect the fit.

Are there foods and drinks I should avoid?

Yes. Whether you wear your retainer while eating or not, try to avoid:

Sugary snacks and drinks, especially between meals and before bed.

Sticky or chewy items like sweets, mints, and gum.

Fizzy drinks (even sugar-free ones) and large amounts of fruit juice.

Hard foods like apples and carrots—cut them into small pieces to prevent damage to the retainer.

How should I care for my teeth and retainer?

Take your retainer out before brushing. Brush your teeth for at least two minutes, twice a day using fluoride toothpaste. Don't use toothpaste to clean your retainer as it can scratch it and cause discoloration. Instead, gently brush it with a toothbrush and cold water over a sink. You can also use an alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash once a day—just not at the same time as brushing. Wait at least 20 minutes after using mouthwash before eating or rinsing.

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Will I still have regular appointments?

You won't need to visit as often now that your braces are off. Any follow-up visits, repairs, or new retainers may incur private fees. You might be asked to sign a retention consent form. Always bring your retainers to each appointment.

Should I keep seeing my regular dentist?

Absolutely. Regular dental check-ups remain important for checking for cavities and overall oral health—especially now that you're using retainers.

What about sports or physical activity?

If you play contact sports, you may need a new mouthguard to wear instead of your retainer during these activities. This also applies to activities like horse riding or skateboarding. Always remove your retainer for swimming and store it in its case.

What if I lose or damage my retainer?

Contact your orthodontist straight away—don't wait for your next appointment. Delays can allow your teeth to shift. There may be a charge for replacing or repairing a retainer.

Remember:

Bring your retainers to every appointment.

Wearing your retainer is your responsibility.

Some people will need to wear retainers for life to maintain their smile.

Contact your orthodontist promptly if your retainer is lost or broken.

Brush twice a day for at least two minutes using fluoride toothpaste.

Limit sugary snacks and drinks, especially between meals and at bedtime.

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