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## **HAWLEY RETAINERS**

### *Patient Instructions*

Now that your appliances have been removed, you have been given orthodontic retainers. There are two major reasons why retainers are needed following the active phase of orthodontic treatment. Retainers, as the name implies, retain the teeth in the corrected position. When the tooth is moved, the ligaments holding the tooth to the bone are stretched and it takes approximately one year for the relaxation of these fibers to occur. Thus, the full-time wear of retainers for at least one year is strongly recommended. Without retainer wear during this time, teeth can move in undesirable positions.

The second reason for wearing retainers is to allow some minor changes in tooth position to occur. By tightening the wires on a retainer, small spaces can be closed and minor changes in tooth position can be achieved.

Generally, retainers are worn on a full-time basis for 12 to 18 months. Then retainer wear is reduced to nighttime only. This still allows for maintenance of the teeth in their corrected positions. Please wear your retainers as directed and **bring them to orthodontic appointments.**

**Failure to wear the retainers as directed, even for a short period of time, may cause a rapid change. Therefore, it is important that you follow these specific instructions given to you to maintain satisfactory results.** The retainers should be removed before meals and replaced after brushing. Brush your teeth and retainers following each meal or snack. If this is not possible, at least rinse your mouth and wash the retainers with water. The retainers are plastic and should only be brushed or rinsed with cold water. **Always bring your retainers with you for each appointment.** Keep retainers away from dogs, as they are attracted to the smell of the saliva left on the retainers.

There is an additional charge for replacement retainers, as per your financial contract with our office. Should replacement become necessary, additional impressions are always needed as dental casts are damaged in the process of making a retainer and are not reusable.

Please keep this sheet for reference. If you have any questions or cannot follow the instructions given to you, please contact our office at (734) 668-8288.