**Northwest Orthodontics - How to take care of/ wear your retainers**

**Retainer wear after your orthodontic treatment**

Please wear your retainer/s in bed at least every night for the first 12 months after your braces are removed.

Once you have completed the initial 12 months of retention it may be possible to reduce the number of nights you have to wear your retainers. If you wish to try this then please follow the guidelines below:

* Gradually reduce your retainer wear by one night at a time – please leave at least a one month between every change.
* Continue to increase the interval between your retainer wear as long as they fit comfortably.
* If the retainer is no longer comfortable then you need to increase its wear until it becomes comfortable again.
* Do not wear the retainers any less than once a week.

Please note there is no time limit on the retainer wear in the long term. If you decide to stop wearing the retainer/s then the teeth are free to move and you may need further orthodontics to have them restraightened if this occurs.

It is extremely unlikely that the cost of this re-treatment will be covered under the NHS payment scheme.

The practice recommends storage of the retainers in a hard box when they are not in use. Retainer boxes are on sale at reception.

**Cleaning your retainer**

Please clean your retainer with a toothbrush/toothpaste and cold water. Hot water can cause your retainer to change shape and thus no longer fit properly.

If this does occur please contact the practice immediately. It is likely that if this does occur you will have to bear the cost of a replacement yourself.

**Lost/ broken/ worn out retainers**

If you lose / damage your retainers or they are starting to wear out please contact the practice immediately.

Do not wait until your next appointment to inform the practice even if it is only a couple of days away.

You may have to bear the cost of the replacement retainers yourself and the practice can inform you of this cost should the need arise.

**Tooth brushing with the retainer**

Please remove the retainer before cleaning your teeth.

You must brush your teeth at least 3 times a day.

Make sure you brush after eating and do an extra special clean before you go to bed.

We also recommend that you use a fluoride mouthwash every night before you go to bed.

**Pain or discomfort from the retainer**

It is not uncommon for patients to feel that the retainer/s are tight when they first put them into their mouth. This tightness is more common when you have the retainers fitted initially and tends to reduce after the first couple of months. If you feel that the retainers are excessively tight and you are concerned about it please contact the practice for advice.

**Dental work and your retainer**

Some work carried out by your dentist may cause your retainer to no longer fit – please contact the practice or ask your dentist for advice before having any dental work undertaken.