National University
Centre for Oral Health
Singapore



All About Retainers



What is an orthodontic retainer?

An orthodontic retainer is a custom-made appliance worn after orthodontic treatment to help maintain the alignment of your teeth.

Why do you need a retainer?

Once your braces are removed, your teeth may still be prone to shifting. A retainer ensures that your teeth do not shift back to their original positions, helping you preserve your beautiful smile.

Benefits of a retainer:

- Prevents teeth from shifting: Keeps your teeth from moving back to their original position.
- Supports long-term results: Helps maintain the effects of orthodontic treatment.
- Helps with maintaining a proper bite.



Types of Retainers

There are several types of retainers, and your orthodontist will help determine the best option for you based on your specific needs.

1. Fixed/Bonded Retainers



- A thin wire is bonded to the back of your teeth
- Discreet and effective for maintaining alignment
- Cannot be removed
- Requires special care for cleaning

2. Removable Retainers

- Hawley retainer
- Clear retainer (vacuum formed retainer/Essix retainer)
- Easy to clean and remove
- Can be lost or damaged if not handled properly



Hawley retainer



Clear retainer

How long do you need to wear a retainer?

The length of time you need to wear your retainer depends on your specific situation. Generally, patients are instructed to wear their retainer:

- Full-time (24 hours a day) for the first 6 months after removing braces.
- Nighttime only for the rest of your life depending on your orthodontist's recommendation.

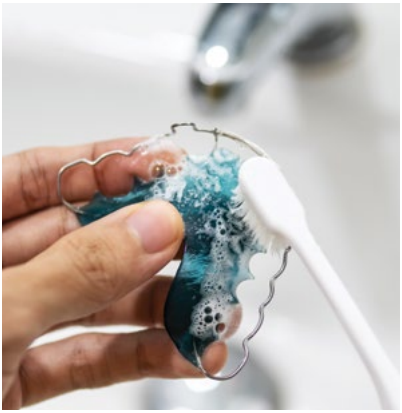
The retention phase is crucial to ensure the results of your orthodontic treatment are permanent. Over time, you may gradually reduce wear, but lifelong use of a retainer is often recommended to maintain perfect alignment.



Caring for your retainer

Proper care of your retainer is essential to ensure its longevity and effectiveness:

- **Clean regularly:** Use a toothbrush and lukewarm water to clean your retainer daily. Avoid using toothpaste, as it may scratch the surface.
- **Store properly:** When not in use, always store your retainer in its protective case to prevent damage or loss.
- **Avoid heat:** Never expose your retainer to hot water or direct sunlight, as heat can distort the material.



- **Regular check-ups:** Bring your retainer to your orthodontic appointments to ensure it is still fitting well and in good condition.

The importance of wearing your retainer

Not wearing your retainer as directed can cause your teeth to shift, undoing the results of your orthodontic treatment. In some cases, this may require additional treatment to correct.

To maintain your beautiful smile, it is essential to follow your orthodontist's advice on retainer wear. This ensures lasting, healthy results for years to come.

Notes

Our Patient Care Institutions

National University Hospital
Ng Teng Fong General Hospital &
Jurong Community Hospital
Alexandra Hospital
National University Polyclinics
Jurong Medical Centre
National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
National University Heart Centre, Singapore
National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore
NUHS Diagnostics
NUHS Pharmacy

Scan the QR code for more information on our patient care institutions.

NUHS Dental: (65) 6716 2233
NUHS Dental General Enquiries/ Appointments: NUHS_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg
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