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## **How to care for your retainer**

### **Essix-type retainers**

Essix retainers are removable retainers that are made entirely of transparent plastic, which makes them less noticeable than traditional wire retainers. Another benefit is that they encourage good dental hygiene; you can take them out when you brush and floss, and clean the retainer itself at the same time. Unlike some wire retainers, Essix retainers cover the entire arch of the teeth and are uniquely molded to the shape of your mouth.

### **How Essix retainers work**

Essix retainers gently guide your teeth into a position where the upper and lower sets are even, straight and align with each other. Though your teeth may feel firmly set in your mouth, they move when under constant pressure, and can assume new positions in the mouth all on their own. Essix retainers maintain the intended position following orthodontic treatment; all while providing minor correction to slightly misaligned teeth if needed.

### **Essix retainer care**

- Rinse the retainer in *cold* water every time you take it out and before you put it back in.
- Store the retainer in the plastic case given to you whenever you aren't wearing it.
- Don't brush the retainer with toothpaste, as it can scratch the surface.
- Brush the retainer after each meal with *cool* water and a *soft* toothbrush.
- Don't put the retainer in hot or warm water, this can shrink or damage it. Cold water only!

### **How long should you wear your retainers?**

You must wear your retainers 24/7 (except for eating and brushing) for 3 months. After that, wear them after brushing your teeth after dinner, for as long as you want to keep your teeth straight. However, you can wear them more if you want.

### **Living with your retainers**

As delicate as they are, wearing Essix retainers should be trouble-free, and your routine should remain the same. Floss and brush your teeth after eating and drinking anything but water, using a soft-bristled toothbrush. If your retainer begins to feel uncomfortable, it's a sign your teeth are moving out of position and you might not be wearing the retainer often enough. Wearing your retainer more will reduce this discomfort. The average lifespan of an Essix retainer is 3 to 4 years, depending on care.

I have read and received a copy of these instructions and understand them. I have had my questions about caring for my retainer answered by Dr. Chew and his staff. I understand that if I lose or damage my retainer the cost of a replacement retainer is \$600.

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Signature (Patient *and* Parent/Guardian)

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Date