

## Retainers

Retainers are an essential element of orthodontic treatment. It is a fact that our faces change with time and that includes our teeth. Teeth, particularly front teeth, moved over time whether we have had braces or not.

Research at the University of Washington in Seattle has shown that patients who had rigid fixed wire retainers in place for ten years after braces and then had these retainers removed. Within months their teeth started to move or “relapse”. Therefore retention has to be considered a lifelong commitment if we want to stop our teeth moving.

Types of retainers

### Removable Retainers:

These are the most common type of retainers and practically everyone who has had braces will receive removable retainers. We use two types regularly



#### Essix retainer

- Clear, virtually invisible
- Minimal interference with speech
- Easy to wear, comfortable
- Cost approx. €100 each
- Need to be replaced every 18-24 months(( DENTSPLY International)

#### Hawley Retainer



- Wire bow fits over the front of teeth which is visible

- Has palate which can interfere with speech initially
- Adjustable –allows some “tweaking” of tooth positioning
- Allows teeth to meet naturally which feels better
- Costs €200+ each
- With good care should last a number of years.

## Fixed Retainers



These are semi rigid wires bonded to the inside of the front teeth- typically the six lower teeth and four upper teeth.

- They are “hidden” behind the teeth so are invisible to other people.
- They retain teeth very well.
- Need regular maintenance and checks as the bond wears over time.
- Only retain front teeth so removable retainers are also necessary for side and back teeth.
- Hygiene can be difficult and special floss is required. There is potential for damage to be caused to teeth and gums if maintenance guidelines not followed.
- Limited lifespan.
- Replacement costs €150+.