

Box 16.2 Patient information sheet about clear plastic retainers

1. Your retainers are as important as your braces.

If you do not wear your retainers as instructed, your teeth will move back towards how they were before treatment. If you cannot wear your retainers, please contact ...

2. How often do I wear them?

You should wear the retainers at night, *every* night.

3. How long do I have to wear them?

The best way to reduce the risk of teeth going crooked is to continue wearing the retainers at night. This is because we now know that teeth move all through our life.

4. How do I keep them clean?

Clean your retainers with a toothbrush and water but *do not use toothpaste* on the retainer. Toothpaste will discolour and degrade the retainer. Your orthodontist may recommend using a special retainer cleaner.

5. Do not eat or drink with the retainer in.

You should never eat or drink when you are wearing the retainer.

6. Keep the retainer safe

When you are not wearing the retainer, keep it safely in a protective box.

7. What do I do if I miss wearing it for a night?

You must try and wear the retainers every night. If you do forget, then wear the retainer full-time except meals for 2 days. This is often enough to squeeze the teeth back into place.

8. What do I do if I lose a retainer?

If you lose a retainer, wear the spare we have provided. Then contact the department and if you bring the models back in we will be able to make another spare for you. There will be a small charge to make the replacement.

9. What do I do if the retainer rubs?

If the retainer rubs, you can smooth it with an emery board used to file nails. If this doesn't work, then contact us.

10. Bring your retainers to every appointment

It is important that you bring your retainers to every appointment, so that we can check and adjust them if needed.

This information can be given to patients who are prescribed clear plastic retainers. This sheet can be downloaded from: www.oup.com/uk/orthodontics5e.