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DENTAL CARE
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4 tips for retainer care

Make sure your retainer lasts a long time by taking proper care of it. The better you treat your retainer, the better it'll treat you: giving you a straight, healthy smile for a lifetime.

Take it out before you eat

Remove your retainer before you eat so it doesn't trap food and plaque. Carry your retainer case with you, and pop your retainer in before meals. Never wrap a retainer in a napkin or tissue — you or someone else might accidentally throw it in the trash!

First clean, then store

Rinse and brush your retainer regularly. This helps remove tartar that can build up on the surface. You can use a regular toothbrush and toothpaste or soak your retainer in a glass of water with some baking soda. If you don't have to wear a retainer very often (for example, you only wear it every other night), store it in a container with sufficient airflow so it doesn't breed mold and bacteria.

Avoid harsh chemicals

Toothpaste and water should be sufficient to clean your retainer. When letting your retainer soak, you can add baking soda, mild vinegar or denture tablets to the water. Never use bleach or alcohol-based mouthwash. These products can damage the plastic — and your mouth. Boiling your retainer is another serious no-no; it can warp the metal and melt the plastic.

Remove when brushing

Never brush your teeth while wearing a retainer. You'll miss large areas of your mouth, and the toothbrush may accidentally displace the retainer. Instead, brush and floss after you've removed your retainer, and then brush the retainer separately.