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Congratulations! You've made it!

We hope you are as happy with your orthodontic result as we are. Although you have successfully completed your active phase of treatment, you are about to begin the retention phase. This phase is equally as important as the first (while the braces were on)!

Some common questions are answered below, followed by instructions to help you maintain your result!

Why are retainers important?

Retainers are necessary to control the teeth even after all of the tissues have adapted to the new tooth position. This includes the influence of the bones, gums, cheeks, lips and tongue.

How long do I have to wear my retainers?

For as long as you would like to keep your teeth straight. Hopefully this is for the rest of your lifetime!

What does a retainer feel like?

It depends on what type of retainer you have, but most retainers feel tight at first. After wearing your retainer for several weeks, it should fit comfortably and securely.

Maintenance and care of retainers:

- Wear as instructed with regard to full-time or bedtime wear (ask your orthodontist if you are unsure).
- If you are instructed to wear your retainers full time, remember to take them out when you are eating and brushing.
- Whenever your retainer is not in your mouth, it goes **in your case!** Your retainer does not belong in a tissue, paper towel or on the counter.
- Remove retainers when swimming and during contact sports.
- Clean your retainer after each meal:
 - Gently brush your retainer and run it under cold water after each meal.
 - You may occasionally want to use liquid soap and a toothbrush to clean your retainer.
- Do not place your retainer in hot water or leave it in a hot car as the retainer can change shape.
- If your retainer is lost or damaged, it will have to be replaced at an additional expense.
- Protect your retainer from hungry pets who might chew on the case and appliances!
- If you forget to wear your retainer for one night, wear it for the following 24 hours and then return to nighttime wear.
- Remember that teeth can move slightly, even with diligent retainer wear, so contact the office if you see any objectionable changes.

We have full confidence in you and your ability to wear your retainer to keep your teeth just as beautiful as the day your braces came off!