

## Retainer Instructions

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information that you need to know in order to maximize the effectiveness of the retainers and to take proper care of them. This information is also available on my web site: <http://www.orthonj.com>. Click on the “Learning Center” link, then “Appliance Info”, then under “Retainers” click on “Instructions”.

1. Never wrap the retainer up in a napkin. This is the primary way that retainers get thrown away (by you or someone else who is cleaning up) or broken.
2. Do not leave the retainer out on a plate at a restaurant. The waiter can clear the table when you are not thinking about it and the retainer can be lost.
3. Unless instructed otherwise, the retainers should be worn day and night.
4. Take the retainers out to brush your teeth. When brushing, pay particular attention to the inside surfaces of your teeth that the retainer was touching.
5. Clean the retainers with your toothbrush and toothpaste. Concentrate specifically on the side of the retainer that is in contact with your gums. Failure to clean the retainers well can result in damage to your gums and teeth.
6. The retainer’s plastic taste will disappear quickly, and your speech will return to normal after a few days of wearing the retainer.
7. When you first get the retainer, it may feel like you are biting on a wire in the back. After a couple of days this feeling should go away.
8. Initially, it may feel like there is a space between an upper retainer and the roof of your mouth. As the retainer settles over a few days you will feel this less or not at all.
9. Don’t flip the retainer with your tongue. This could damage the retainer and/or your teeth.
10. Put the retainer in with your fingers; don’t bite the retainer into place – this will damage or break it.
11. Use your best judgment regarding removing them for sports, swimming, singing, meetings, etc. If there is a significant risk that they will be lost or damaged if you continue to wear them while doing an activity, take them out. If you are going to take them out, put them in the case that we gave you, and remember to put them back in when you are done with the activity.
12. If I am using the retainer to move your teeth, wearing them any less than full time severely reduces their effectiveness, and the teeth will either move very slowly or not at all.
13. If there are wires on the outsides of your teeth, they should not be used to remove the retainers. This will bend and eventually break them. Use clasps on the back teeth to remove the retainers.
14. The retainers are made out of acrylic, which is sensitive to heat. Do not subject the retainers to heat; they will distort and become unusable. This includes boiling them, putting them in the dishwasher, leaving them in a hot car, etc.
15. Keep the retainers away from dogs – they will chew on the retainers and break them.
16. Bring your retainers to each appointment.
17. Do not use over-the-counter denture cleaners like Efferdent or Polydent. These cleaners attack the solder joints and dissolve them. You can soak them in Listerine for about 10 minutes once a day.
18. Occasionally, a piece of acrylic will chip or break. As long as the retainer is still wearable, you can continue to wear it until I can check it for you. If there is a sharp edge, you can use a nail file to smooth it off.
19. If there is any part of the retainer that is pinching your gums, set up an appointment with me so that I can fix this for you.
20. Do not put the retainers in your pocket if they are not inside the case. The wires will bend and the retainer will break.
21. Never forget rule #1.