

Full Coverage Retainer (FCR)

Wearing retainers is the last phase of your orthodontic treatment. Your retainers will keep your teeth straight as they settle into their final position. FCRs are plastic appliances that fit over the upper and/or lower teeth and provide a surface to control how the teeth opposite the FCR will hit. By doing this, Dr. Cooke can control the positioning of the jaw and use the FCR to reduce forces to the affected jaw joints, relax muscles, and prevent further wear on natural teeth from grinding forces.



Certain technical considerations for each individual patient dictate whether the FCR is worn on the upper or lower teeth and in rare cases, both upper and lower teeth.

FCRs cover all the teeth in the arch. Because all of the teeth are covered, the teeth under the FCR are “retained” and cannot shift. In this case, bite changes are minimized because all of the upper teeth are touching the FCR.

The FCRs are flat and smooth. They allow the muscles to relax and the jaw to find its own “natural” unstrained position. They provide equal contact for opposite teeth so that the jaw is supported. They also allow smooth gliding movement of the teeth as the patient grinds, so that muscles are not activated. FCRs are also constructed so that patients put less force on their jaw joints when they move their jaw to the side or to the front.

Inserting Retainers

Insert retainers with finger pressure ONLY. Do NOT use your teeth to insert retainers or they will break. Removal should be with BOTH hands to prevent cracks from occurring. The life expectancy of a retainer depends on the care you give it. Speech and salivation may be different for the few days, but they will return to normal after wearing your retainer for about week.

Retainer Wear

Retainers are to be worn every night forever. Failure to wear retainers every night may result in shifting of teeth that may require re-treatment.

It’s very important to **carefully clean your teeth** by brushing, flossing and rinsing well before the retainers are placed in your mouth. **Never** drink carbonated beverages, juice, milk or anything besides plain water just before the retainers are worn. Failure to follow these instructions could result in decay and discoloration of your teeth from sugars that may be on your teeth.

Retainer Care

A retainer is often lost when it is wrapped in a napkin at a meal and then thrown away. There are only two safe places for your retainers: in your case and in your mouth! Brush your retainers with toothpaste daily. Once a week, use denture cleaner (Efferdent or Polident), white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide to soak retainers in for best results. NEVER boil your retainers or place in hot water. NEVER boil your retainers or place in hot water. Caution: if a dog gets the retainer it will be destroyed. (This could lead to bad feelings about the dog and I’m sure you like your dog – so, let’s keep it that way.)

Retainer Check-ups

Always remember to bring your retainer to your check up visits! Retainer check-ups will be on an as needed basis for the first year.

Please feel free to call us with any questions you may have!