

Bonded Retainers

Bonded retainers are also known as permanent or fixed retainers and are considered the best way to prevent undesirable movement of the teeth, especially the lower front teeth and also for holding severe corrections such as rotations. The retainers consist of a braided stainless steel wire that connects to the back surfaces of the front teeth, usually behind the 4 teeth on top and behind the 6 teeth on the bottom. Composite resin (dental restorative material) is used to adhere the appliance to the teeth.

Below summarizes the pros and cons of fixed retention using permanent bonded retainers.

Pros - Effective retention applied 24/7, preserving the orthodontic correction

- Cannot be misplaced, stolen or inadvertently destroyed (thrown in dumpster or eaten by dog)

- Replaces wearing removable retainers full time

- Long lasting (can be kept in 25+ years)

- Aesthetic and invisible appliance

- No interference with normal activities such as speech, sports, or musical instruments

Cons -Requires more maintenance (hygiene and diet)

- Can break out or come loose

- Does not hold back teeth in place

Proper care is important so the retainers are protected and they will last as long as possible. Daily brushing and flossing are needed along with regular 6 month cleanings at your dentist to maintain good dental health and to make sure the areas around the retainer are kept clean. Avoid direct biting into hard objects with the front teeth (carrots, apples, candy, etc.) is important to protect the retainer from coming loose.

Clear overlay retainers (essex retainers) are needed to wear overnight. These have 3 important functions. The first is to hold the corrections of the back teeth. The second is a backup in case the bonded retainers do come loose to make sure the front teeth stay in place. The third is to help protect the retainers for any nighttime grinding or clenching. Problems such as grinding will often cause the bonded retainers to come loose due to the excessive forces that are placed on the teeth.

There is always the potential for the bonded retainers to come loose. **If a retainer does come loose, please let our office know immediately.** If a single spot becomes loose, we will patch it. If the entire wire comes out there a few different options depending on the severity of problems at the start of treatment. If there were severe problems at the start of treatment, such as rotations, we will try to replace the bonded retainer back into position. If the original problems were more modest or enough time has passed (generally over a year) we often switch to a more conventional removable retainer to hold the corrections. In some cases, the bonded retainers do not stay in well, usually due to tooth shapes and sizes (especially with smaller teeth) and we will switch to removable retainers. If dental hygiene is a problem, the bonded retainers will need to be removed to protect dental health and removable retainers will need to be made with the cost of lab fees.

Once all follow up at our office has been completed, your dentist will monitor for any problems. If at some point either you or your dentist request they be removed, let us know so that removable retainers can be made. Lab fees will be charged for replacement retainers. Please remember, your teeth will only stay straight for as long as you wear retainers, if you choose to discontinue use you must assume responsibility for any movement.

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