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**This letter provides generic retainer advice for discharged orthodontic patients.**

In general patients who complete orthodontic treatment are required to wear retainers to maintain the alignment of their teeth and the stability of the occlusal correction. The advice is usually to wear the removable retainers at least every night for 6 months and then to begin wearing the retainers on alternate nights for the long term.

It is important to realise that withdrawal of retainers, in almost all cases, will allow tooth movement to recommence and crowding of the upper and lower incisors in particular are likely to worsen over time. Teeth do continue to shift naturally over time. With this in mind, we generally advise patients to continue with their removable retainers indefinitely for 2-3 nights per week in the long term. If removable retainers do start to become tight then this indicates that the teeth are moving slightly and then the removable retainers should be worn more often.

Where a fixed wire retainer has been provided this should be maintained indefinitely as long as the oral hygiene remains satisfactory.

Please view the BOS 'Hold that Smile' videos

<https://youtu.be/5wCfjIStzc>

The NHS in primary and secondary care offers retainer care for one year following removal of retainers. Now that we are no longer seeing this patient for orthodontic care; **the long term review and maintenance of the retainers is the patient's responsibility.**

**According to NHS England, the commissioners of dental services in England**, retainer checks should form part of a patients' general dental check-ups. If simple repairs or replacements are needed for the removable or wire retainers then it is likely that your dentist will be able carry this out for you. If there is something more complex, then a local specialist orthodontist may be more appropriate. There is likely to be a private fee relating to any work carried out as the NHS cannot provide long term orthodontic care.

We are not able to offer long term retainer follow up/maintenance and have discharged you back to your dentist.

Kind Regards

The Orthodontic Team at Barts Health NHS Trust.

For the most up to date information about the dental school and dental specialities' activities; including referral criteria and referral pro-formas please visit the website -