

## Clear Retainers (a.k.a. Essix) Instructions

### What is an Essix Retainer?

Often we use retainers to hold teeth in position after they have been orthodontically straightened. The type of retainers a patient is prescribed depends on the condition of their teeth, their previous dental and orthodontic treatment history, as well as what an dentist recommends as the best course of treatment. The retainers guide and maintain the position and alignment of teeth to create an attractive and beautiful smile, and today there's wide a range to choose from. Essix retainers, in particular, are clear, slim molds that fit over your teeth. We might recommend an Essix retainer as the final stage in a course of orthodontic treatment, or as a complete alternative to braces.

### Different Types of Retainers

Some retainers are fixed (bonded in place) and others are removable and made of wires or plastic. Essix retainers are removable and made entirely of transparent plastic, which makes them less noticeable than traditional wire retainers. Another benefit of Essix retainers is that they encourage good dental hygiene; you can take out your retainer when you brush and floss, and clean the retainer yourself at the same time. Unlike wire retainers, Essix retainers cover the entire arch of the teeth. But like the traditional Hawley Retainer, each one is uniquely molded to the shape of your mouth.

### How Essix Retainers Work

Essix retainers are molded to your mouth, making it unique to the shape of your mouth. These retainers cover all of your teeth, guiding them into a position where the upper and lower sets are even and straight and align with each other. Though your teeth may feel firmly set in your mouth, they move when under constant pressure, and can assume new positions in the mouth all on their own due to the forces created by chewing, the tongue and the lips. Essix retainers are aesthetically pleasing because of the clear plastic material they are made of. They are also often referred to as overlay retainers because of the fact that they fully cover your teeth. They have an average lifespan of 18–24 months. This can be decreased for patients who clench or grind their teeth. If you know that you clench or grind, let your dentist know, because a different appliance may suit you best.

### Pros and Cons of Essix Retainers

Just like any other type of retainers, Essix retainers also have some advantages and disadvantages.

## Advantages of Essix Retainers

Essix retainers have many advantages, including:

- Removable
- Can be easily cleaned
- Transparent

## Disadvantages of Essix Retainers

While comparing with other kinds of retainers here are a few disadvantages associated with wearing an Essix retainer which include:

- Non-adjustable
- Plastic may warp if exposed to heat
- Can interfere with a person's speech

## Essix Retainer Care

Usually an Essix retainer should last the entire length of your orthodontic treatment. When caring for your retainer be sure to:

- Never bite appliance into place, always place in mouth with fingers
- Never eat or drink with retainer in place (Only water is allowed)
- Rinse your Essix retainer in cold water every time you take it out and before you put it back in.
- Brush your retainer with cool to Luke warm water and a soft toothbrush and gel toothpaste after having each meal.
- Don't brush the retainer with gritty or whitening toothpaste, as it can scratch the surface.
- Store your retainer in a braces plastic case whenever you aren't wearing it.
- Keep away from pets, animals will seek out appliances to chew
- Don't put the retainer in hot water, which will shrink it. Never use hot or boiling water to clean the retainer or place it in the dishwasher.
  
- Wash the retainer with a specialized retainer cleaner once every two to three months.
- Please bring your retainer to every appointment so Dr. is able to check the fit and make any adjustments.
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## **Life with Essix Retainers**

Your life should not change due to retainers, wearing Essix retainers should be trouble-free, and your routine should remain the same. Floss your teeth once a day and brush twice a day, using a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. If your retainer begins to feel uncomfortable, it's a sign your teeth are moving out of position and you might not be wearing the retainer often enough. Wearing your retainer more will reduce this discomfort.