Dental: Wearing a Retainer

Retainers are appliances worn at the end of orthodontic treatment. When your teeth are in proper position and the bands have been removed, the retainers hold the teeth in place. They allow the teeth to stabilize and the bone to develop. You will be wearing the retainer for at least 18 months. Retainers are either removable or fixed (cemented) to your teeth.

Wearing Your Retainer

- The doctor or dental assistant will show you how to place and remove the upper retainer (Picture 1).
- At first this appliance may feel tight. You may notice an increased flow of saliva (water in your mouth). This is normal and will decrease as you get used to wearing the retainer.
- Your speech may be slurred until you get used to the retainer.
- It is very important that you wear this retainer 24 hours a day.
- You may remove your retainer when you eat, brush your teeth or play sports.

Taking Care of Your Retainer

- It is very important that you keep your retainer clean.
- Brush your retainer whenever you brush your teeth. Do this at least twice a day.
- Never wrap your retainer in a napkin or paper towel. It might get thrown away!
- Do not put your retainer in your purse or pocket because it may get broken. Keep it in your mouth.
- If your retainer breaks or is lost, call the dental office right away!
Important Information

- It is **very important** that you wear your retainer. If you do not wear it, your teeth will begin to move back to their original position and become crowded again.

- Your retainer and teeth will be checked every 3 to 4 months. It is **very important** to keep these appointments. Bring your retainers with you.

- The doctor will tell you when you can stop wearing your retainers. Wear them for the amount of time your doctor told you.

- **Remember:** if you stop wearing your retainer you may have to wear braces again.

If you have questions, be sure to ask your dentist or dental assistant or call ______________.