

## Care Guide No.5 Bonded Retainers

**A bonded retainer is a fine wire 'glued' to the back of your front teeth. These are often recommended in cases where tooth movement is likely after treatment has finished. Your Orthodontist will have discussed the necessity and risks and benefits of a having a permanent retainer prior to fitting it.**

### **How long will it be on my teeth?**

The bonded retainer can last for several years but not forever. It will eventually break through wear and tear, no fault of the orthodontic treatment or orthodontist. When it breaks it will usually feel rough against your tongue. You will need to contact an orthodontist about this as soon as you can. The Health service will only pay for one bonded retainer. Any further bonded retainers are funded by the patient.

### **How do I clean my bonded retainer?**

You brush your teeth as normal. In addition, you should use 'Superfloss' every day this is available in the dental section of most large chemist shops. You must attend your own dentist every 6 months for a routine check up.

### **What are the risks associated with bonded retainers?**

- If you fail to contact your Orthodontist when the retainer becomes loose, if you notice your teeth moving and fail to contact your Orthodontist, or if you fail to wear your removable retainer, your teeth will no longer be straight. The National Health Service will not pay to have your teeth straightened again.
- If you do not brush your teeth correctly and look after your gums, you may be at risk of gum disease. You must visit your own dentist every 6 months and have your gum health checked and some scaling (cleaning) carried out as necessary.
- If you take frequent sugary foods and drinks, you may also get holes in your front teeth around the retainer.
- Wire syndrome is a complication where a fixed bonded retainer causes unwanted, unexpected, and often rapid tooth movement. This can occur despite the bonded retainer remaining intact and can result in tooth rotation leading to severe gum recession.

This means that bonded retainers need checked regularly by your dentist at all check ups to make sure they are passive and safe and doing the job they are intended to do. As orthodontists we will see you up to 2 check ups after placement in the year after treatment. You are then under the care of your dentist. We are however, happy to see you if you have any concerns and you can phone the practice for advice and review as necessary.

- Bonded retainers are not sufficient on their own to keep your teeth straight. You will always need to wear your removable Essix retainer long term. No one in this practice will ever advise you to stop wearing your removable retainer. Do not take advice from friends or family about this.

### **Will it become loose and what should I do?**

- It may become loose from time to time as the 'glue' it is stuck on with, wears away.
- You usually become aware that the wire is loose, because the wire will begin to feel rough against your tongue. Occasionally, you may not feel any roughness with your tongue, but only notice some movement of your teeth.
- You must contact your orthodontist immediately if this occurs. You should consider this as an emergency and an appointment will be arranged for you to see your orthodontist as soon as possible.
- While waiting to see your orthodontist, you should wear your removable retainer that you were given after your braces were removed. This should be worn day and night as this will stop your teeth moving until you are seen by your orthodontist.
- There will also be a charge for repair of the bonded retainer, please contact reception for charges/fees.
- There is also a very small risk that the retainer can detach completely and be inhaled or swallowed. This is extremely unlikely but if you notice any breakages or tooth movement, you must let us know so that a repair can be carried out.