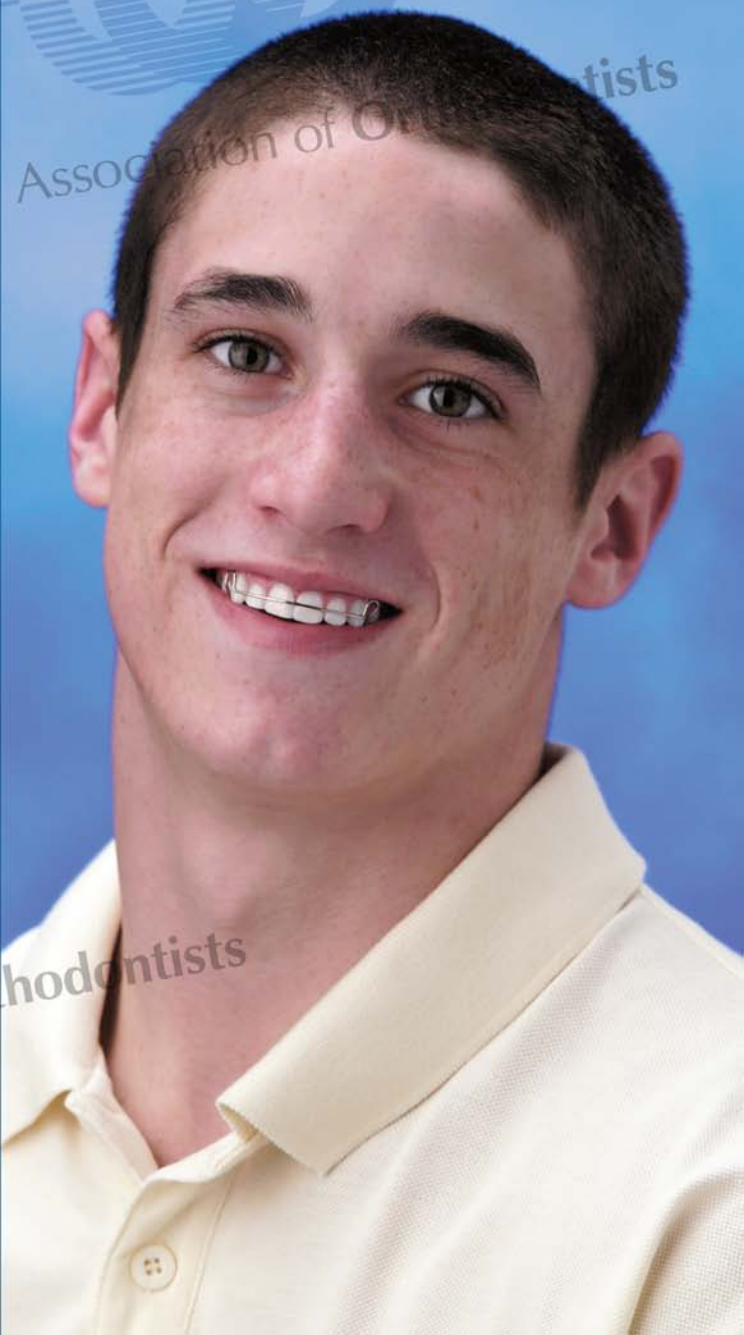


Retainers:

*Helping Keep
Everything Straight*



About the AAO:

Founded in 1900, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) has more than 15,000 members. Active AAO members limit their practices to the dental specialty of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics. Orthodontists are dental specialists with at least two years of advanced orthodontic education after dental school.

The purposes of the American Association of Orthodontists and its member orthodontists are:

to advance the art and science of orthodontics;

to encourage and sponsor research;

to strive for and maintain the highest standards of excellence in orthodontic education and practice;

and to make significant contributions to the health of the public.

Now that your braces have been removed, you and your orthodontist want you to keep that healthy, beautiful smile. Your orthodontist has determined that the best way for you to do that is by wearing a retainer(s).

While wearing a retainer is simple, it is a very complex and powerful appliance. A retainer is an important part of your orthodontic treatment. A retainer is designed to keep your teeth where your braces moved them. *Wearing your retainer as instructed is the key to maintaining the success of your orthodontic treatment.*



There are a variety of retainers. Some are removable and some are fixed—that is, they are cemented to your teeth. Your orthodontist will provide the kind of retainer that best maintains the new positions of your teeth.

Follow Your Orthodontist's Instructions.

Your retainer is designed to perform a vital role in your overall orthodontic treatment. It's very important that you wear your retainer exactly as you have been instructed. Otherwise, your treatment goals may not be maintained. If you're wearing retainers after braces and you don't follow your doctor's instructions, your teeth could move toward their original positions, erasing some of the great results you achieved from treatment.

You may need to wear your retainers quite a while, so be patient. Each person's case is different. Follow your orthodontist's instructions for wearing your retainers. In some cases, permanent retention will be necessary. Your orthodontist will determine how long you'll need to wear retainers.



If your retainer is attached to your teeth, it's important to brush thoroughly after meals and clean under the wire with dental floss at least once a day. Your orthodontist will teach you how to care for your fixed retainer. If you can't brush after a meal, be sure to at least rinse your mouth out with water until you have a chance to brush thoroughly.

Whether your retainer is removable or fixed, make sure you see your dentist for a thorough cleaning every six months (or more often, if recommended).

3. Handle Them With Care.

Remember: whenever your retainer is not in your mouth, it should be in its case for safety. Retainers are easier to lose than you think, and they're expensive to replace. They fall out of pockets and purses. If you take your retainer out to eat and wrap it in a napkin, you may accidentally throw it away. When they're just lying around, retainers have a way of falling on the floor and being stepped on, or even being picked up by pets.

If you're instructed to wear your retainer for only a part of the day, keep it in its case when it's not being worn, so it won't be damaged or lost. Depending on the way your retainer is made, your orthodontist may even instruct you to keep it in a moist environment when you're not wearing it.

It's Really Up To You.

If your retainers are to do their important job, you must do three things:

1. Wear Them As Directed.

Retainers are effective only if you faithfully follow your orthodontist's instructions for wearing them.

And they're doing their jobs only when they're in your mouth, not in your pocket or purse. Remember: wearing that retainer after your braces are removed is the best way to preserve that healthy, beautiful smile you worked so hard to get.

2. Keep Them Clean.

If you've been fitted with a removable retainer, it's easy to clean when you take it out. Your orthodontist will show you how.



Make Your Retainer Work For You.

Your retainer is specially designed by your orthodontist to help you maintain the results from your treatment. Following these few simple guidelines for wearing and taking care of your retainer will make your treatment last. Your reward will be a lifetime of healthy, beautiful smiles.

Preserve That Healthy, Beautiful Smile You Worked So Hard To Get.

A Problem With Your Retainer? Contact Your Orthodontist Immediately.

If your retainer should break or be lost, contact your orthodontist at once for a replacement. If your retainer is not fitting properly – which may happen if you do not wear your retainer as prescribed by your orthodontist – or if your fixed retainer should become loose, call your orthodontist right away for an appointment.

It's Important To Choose An Orthodontist.

An orthodontist is a specialist in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of dental and facial irregularities. All orthodontists are dentists, but only about six percent of dentists are orthodontists. Admission to orthodontic programs is extremely competitive and selective.

It takes many years to become an orthodontist and the educational requirements are demanding.

An orthodontist must complete college requirements before starting a three- to five-year graduate program at a dental school accredited by the American Dental Association (ADA). After dental school, at least two or three academic years of advanced specialty education in an ADA-accredited orthodontic program are required to be an orthodontist. The program includes advanced education in biomedical, behavioral and basic sciences. The orthodontic student learns the complex skills required to manage tooth movement (orthodontics) and guide facial development (dentofacial orthopedics).

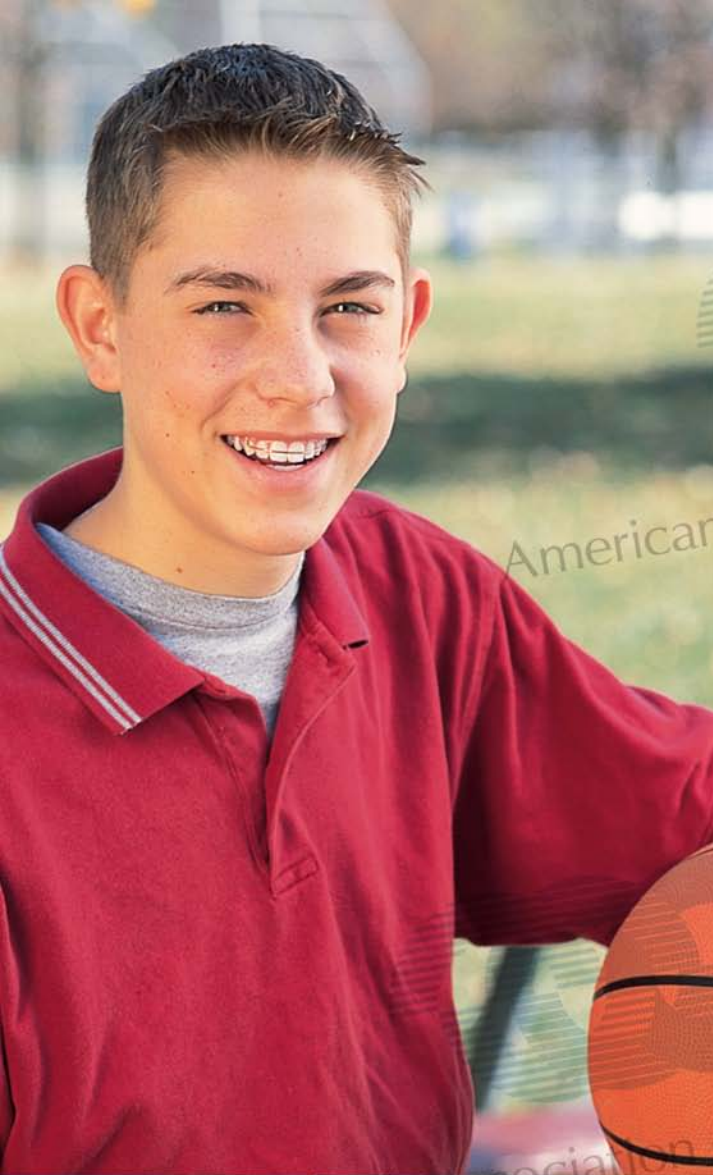
Only dentists who have successfully completed these advanced specialty education programs may call themselves orthodontists.

Partnership: You, Your Orthodontist and Your Dentist.

Achieving healthy, beautiful smiles is a team effort that involves the orthodontist, the family dentist, the patient (and the parents, if the patient is young) and, as needed, other dental specialists. The orthodontist provides the expertise, the treatment plan and the techniques to straighten teeth and align the jaws. The family dentist helps make sure that teeth and gums stay clean and healthy. *The patient must cooperate by following the dentist's and the orthodontist's instructions carefully so that the teeth and jaws move in the way desired and on the prescribed schedule.*

Because dental hygiene is so important, regular visits to the family dentist must continue every six months during orthodontic treatment (or more often, if recommended). It is essential that the patient avoid foods which may damage orthodontic appliances. The patient must also maintain a healthy, nutritional diet to achieve the best possible results from treatment. A good diet provides essential nutrients to bones and tissues undergoing change during orthodontic treatment.





For a Smile that's Good for Life:

- Follow the American Dental Association's recommendation and start dental visits by your child's first birthday.
- Make regular visits to your dentist at least every six months.
- Take your child for an orthodontic check-up no later than age 7. If a problem is detected, your orthodontist can determine the best time to start treatment.
- Get your child an orthodontic check-up even if he or she is past age 7. Although an early check-up can be extremely beneficial, the fact is that most orthodontic patients begin active treatment between ages 9 and 14.
- Keep in mind that orthodontic treatment can also benefit adults. Less visible, more comfortable braces make treatment more appealing than ever, and healthy teeth, bones and gums of almost any age respond well to treatment.
- Choose an orthodontist – the dental specialist who is uniquely qualified to treat orthodontic problems.
- Take advantage of the affordability of orthodontic treatment today. Most orthodontists have a variety of convenient payment plans.
- Remember that successful orthodontic treatment is the result of a partnership. The orthodontist, family dentist and, *especially*, a cooperative patient all work together to create a healthy, beautiful smile that's good for life.



*Members of the
American Association of Orthodontists
wish you and your family good dental health.*



American Association of **Orthodontists**

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