

## *Congratulations---your teeth are out of jail!*

The retainers that you'll be receiving are designed to retain (or hold) your teeth in their finished positions. At first you must wear the retainers every night while sleeping, unless instructed otherwise. Always bring your retainers when you visit the office.

### Hawley Retainers

In a few weeks your Hawley retainers will be ready. These are colored plastic and wire retainers. Unless instructed otherwise, you must wear these retainers every night while sleeping. If you spend the night at a friend's house, it's best to leave your retainers at home. Not wearing them for one night is okay, but skipping three nights in a row is not okay. At first your retainers may feel tight against your teeth. After a few weeks of wear, though, they'll loosen up. Unless your teeth are actually being moved with the retainers, they won't feel very tight. When the retainers are not in your mouth, keep them in the protective case given to you. If a dog gets your retainers they'll be ruined. Never wrap your retainers in a napkin, never put them in your pocket or purse without the protective case, and never put them on a lunch tray. New retainers are very costly. Always bring your retainers with you when you visit the office.

### Teeth shift with age. It all shifts with age.

As you get older, your face will look different. A great deal of research has proven that just as your face changes and shifts with age, your teeth will also shift with age.\* This is true for everyone, whether they've had their teeth straightened or not. This is especially true for the lower front teeth. Therefore, as we say, wrinkling skin, wrinkling teeth. So *if you want your teeth to stay really straight you must wear your retainers at least five nights per week for the rest of your life.* ***Only the use of the retainers will help you succeed in the battle against the aging of the teeth.*** The reality is that most people are not willing to wear retainers for the rest of their life and people just accept aging of their face and teeth.

## Wisdom Teeth

In addition to aging of the face, wisdom teeth contribute to crooked teeth. The safest thing is to have your wisdom teeth removed.\* The best time to have that done is between 16 and 18 years of age. If you'd like, I'll be happy to refer you to the appropriate oral surgeon for removal of the wisdom teeth. *After the wisdom teeth are removed you should continue to wear your retainers at least five nights per week.*

## Lost or Ruined Retainers

If you think something "isn't right" with your retainers or if you lose them, be certain to call the office so that the problem can be evaluated. Waiting a few days to call is okay. However, if you wait too long to come in, your retainers won't fit and new ones will need to be made. New retainers are expensive, so please be careful to take care of and wear your retainers as requested.

If you have questions or concerns, please call the office and we'll help.  
Telephone: 913-782-2207

## References:

\*Little, R.M. Orthodontic Stability and Relapse. Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists bulletin (PCSO), pp. 35-38, Spring, 1991.

\*Behrents, R.G. Growth in the Aging Craniofacial Skeleton. Center for Human Growth and Development. University of Michigan, 1985.

\*Richardson, M. The Role of the Third Molar in the Cause of Late Lower Arch Crowding: A Review. AJO 95; 79-83; 1989.