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The Best Way to Care For & Clean Orthodontic Retainers

Most of the retainer cleansers available on the market are based on cleansers originally developed for cleaning dentures. There are some big differences between orthodontic retainers and dentures. Traditional denture cleansers are not always the best way to clean your retainers, or your nightguards and mouthguards either. Let's go through step by step the best way to care for your orthodontic retainers as well as mouthguards and nightguards. **First off, no matter what type of retainer you have you should always remember to clean it once a day.**

Things Not to Do:

- Avoid scrubbing your retainers with hard toothbrushes, always use soft ones with liquid soap. You can roughen the surfaces of the acrylic or your clear retainers this way, and create more surface area for bacteria to attach and hide. Creating more irregularities and porosities on your retainers will also make it harder for cleansers to do their job.
- Be careful not to over-soak metal and acrylic retainers, especially those with soldered joints. You are more likely to corrode the metal if you over-soak your retainers beyond the time needed to clean them.
- Vinegar is a pretty terrible at home cleansing alternative. Retainers are not like your coffee maker. Not only will it leave your retainers smelling awful, but it may increase the porosity of the acrylic and can corrode retainer wiring if used long-term.
- Avoid exposing your retainers to excessive heat. That means don't leave them on the dashboard of your car in the summer, no microwaving, no boiling them, don't put them in the dishwasher, and definitely don't let them find their way into the washer and dryer by not emptying your pockets.
- Do not put your retainers in a place where your pets can get a hold of them.
- Do not put your retainers in a napkin or Kleenex when you go out to eat. You might forget them and they will be thrown away.

Mouthwash Soak – You can dilute equal parts of mouthwash and water to temporarily make your retainer smell fresh and kill some of the bacteria. However, mouthwash usually contains some amount of alcohol, which can be harmful to the plastic of your retainer. It's OK to soak your retainers in mouthwash occasionally, but regular soaking in mouthwash could harm your retainer.

Be sure to also clean your retainer case before putting your clean retainer away. Simply use warm soapy water to scrub all surfaces of the retainer case. Rinse with clean water and dry.

Traditional Hawley Type (Wire) Retainers OR Clear Plastic Retainers like Essix, Vivera, Clear Aligners:

Recommended Cleanser: Any traditional persulfate cleanser used as directed (i.e. Retainer Brite, Kleenite, SonicBrite, Efferdent, Polident, etc.) or non-persulfate cleanser (i.e DentaSoak)

- Retainer Brite is the most popular retainer cleanser and is listed as certified Kosher. If you are wondering about the ingredients in Retainer Brite here they are:
Potassium Persulfate Compound, Sodium Perborate, Sodium Bicarbonate, Sodium Sulfate, Citric Acid, Soda Ash Dense, Sodium Tripolyphosphate, Sorbitol, Sodium Lauryl Sulfoacetate, PEG 8000, Mint Flavor, Magnesium Stearate, Tetrasodium EDTA, FD & C Blue #2.