



## MK Orthodontics

### **Lower Retaining Wires**

The orthodontic retainer that has been placed is on the back of your lower front teeth (in some cases on the back of the upper front teeth as well). It is referred to as a "bonded lingual retainer." As long as the wire is correctly attached to your teeth, it will hold them reasonably straight.

### **Care of the Wire**

Please be aware that you are responsible for the care of the wire. Proper care includes:

- **Careful, thorough brushing and flossing.** This must be done daily. In addition to brushing, it is essential that you floss between your teeth and into the gum areas below the wire. Most patients find that using a "floss threader" or "Super Floss" is the best and easiest way to clean the area well. When flossing, please be careful not to push too hard on the wire as this can bend or dislodge it, and will cause your teeth to shift. Failure to clean your teeth carefully will result in dental disease.
- If you are not certain how to clean around the wire, **just ask and we will be happy to show you!!!**
- **Do not pick at the wire.**
- **Do not bend the wire.** Unusually hard, sticky, or brittle foods can bend the wire and shift your teeth.

### **Teeth Shift with Age**

Everyone's face changes with age. Research\* has shown that just as your face changes with age, so will your teeth shift with age. This happens whether or not you have had braces! Of all your teeth, the lower front teeth shift the most. As long as the wire is correctly in place, your teeth will stay reasonably well aligned. At the University of Washington in Seattle, retaining wires were left in place for more than 10 years; however after removal of the wires, teeth began to shift within a matter of months. So, retaining wires are an important part of maintaining your smile and will nearly stop your teeth from shifting with age.

### **What if I Have a Problem???**

We will see you to check your wire and removable retainers 1 month after your braces are removed, then again in 6 months, and then 6 months later. If your wire is loose or does not feel right at any time during or after this 12-month period, please contact our office immediately and schedule an appointment as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in crooked teeth, need for re-treatment, added expense, unhappy patients, parents, and a sad orthodontist. So, please be careful and don't hesitate to contact us as needed.

If the wire has debonded completely, please save the wire and bring it with you to your appointment.

\* I acknowledge receiving a copy of this information:

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Patient Name

Parent Name

Date

\* *Stability and Long-Term Change; Seminars in Orthodontics, Volume 5, Number 33; September, 1999.*