

PATIENT GUIDE

Lost or broken retainers

What to do the day a retainer is lost or breaks, and why a week matters more than a month later. · 30 Aug 2026

Retainers get lost and occasionally break, and the fix is straightforward: message us that week and we make a new one from the scan we keep. What matters is speed. A few days without a retainer changes nothing; a few weeks in the first year lets teeth drift, and a replacement made after that may not fit.

What to do

WHAT HAPPENED · WHAT TO DO

A removable retainer is lost

Message us today. If you have an older one that still fits, wear it meanwhile. We make a new one from your scan, usually within a week or two.

A clear retainer has cracked

A hairline crack at the edge can be worn until the replacement arrives. A split across a tooth means it is no longer holding; message us and wear an older one if you have it.

A wire retainer has bent

Do not bend it back. Wear it if it still seats without forcing; if not, message us.

A bonded retainer has come loose on one tooth

Keep the wire in. Wear your removable retainer full time and message us; it needs re-gluing within a couple of weeks.

A bonded retainer has come off completely

Keep it. Wear the removable retainer full time and message us.

The retainer no longer fits after a long gap

Do not force it. Message us. Teeth may have moved a little; a short course of aligners or a new retainer will sort it.

Why the first year is different

In the year after braces the bone around each tooth is still soft and the gum fibres are still pulling. A retainer left off for a fortnight in that year can leave teeth that no longer fit it. Later, the same fortnight makes little difference. Either way, the answer is the same: tell us straight away.

Message us if

- Any retainer is lost or broken, even if you have a spare on.
- Your teeth feel like they have moved.
- A replacement does not seat fully after a few days of wear.

Call us on (09)520 1880 or email hello@milkorthodontics.co.nz.

Tell us this week, not next month.