



Congratulations on getting braces! It's important for you to know how to properly take care of your braces throughout your entire orthodontic care. The following will help guide you and provide answers to common questions.

1. The dental adhesive used to attach your braces to your teeth takes 24 hours to completely harden.

- Over half of the bracket breakage happens within the first week of wear.
- You can eat and drink right away.
- Avoid the foods listed under our "Eating With Braces" section to avoid unnecessary repair trips.
- Avoid picking at your braces with your fingers.

2. Initially your braces will feel like they stick out.

- This sensation is temporary and will not last.
- It is also not uncommon for your lips, cheeks, and tongue to become irritated during the first week as they become used to the braces.
- You can place wax around any irritating brackets to help soothe the area as you get used to the sensation.
- Call our office if you run out of wax.

3. You may notice some discomfort after your braces are placed.

- This is normal and will not last.
- Expect the soreness to last two to three days.
- You can take nonprescription pain medication such as Tylenol or Advil.
- Eating and drinking cold things will also help decrease the discomfort.

Eating with Braces

Certain foods consistently damage orthodontic appliances by distorting wires, breaking brackets, or loosening cement. This can lengthen treatment time and increase costs. Not all harmful foods have been listed. If in doubt, feel free to ask us.

Avoid sticky foods, which can get caught in the braces. When these foods are removed, damage often occurs.

- Marshmallows, gum, toffee, caramel products, gummy worms, Fruit Roll-Ups, dried fruit, raisins, licorice, Jujubes, Tootsie Rolls, etc.

Avoid chewing on hard foods or substances that can easily damage your braces.

- Ice cubes, nuts, hard candies, Jawbreakers, Jolly Ranchers, etc.
- Pencils, pens, water bottles, toothpicks, etc.

Please modify the following foods:

- Apples and other hard fruits - Cut into slices and chew with your back teeth.
- Corn on the cob - Cut the corn off the cob before eating.
- Raw carrots and other hard vegetables - Cut into small pieces and chew with your back teeth.
- Popcorn - Avoid the kernels.
- Wings and ribs - Cut meat off instead of biting it off.
- Hard, crusty breads (pizza, tacos, etc.) - Break into small pieces and chew with your back teeth.



Avoid sweets and soft drinks as they can cause tooth decay along the edge of the braces.

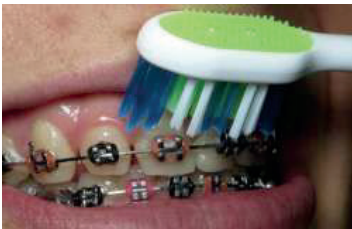
- When you consume sugary foods or drinks, be sure to brush right away, concentrating on the areas between the braces and gums.
- If brushing is not possible, rinse thoroughly with water.

Brushing and Flossing with Braces

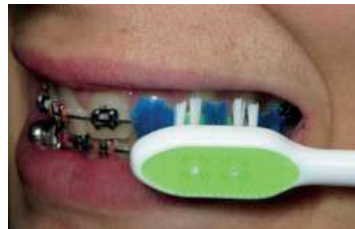
Proper brushing and flossing will keep your teeth and gums healthy and your breath smelling fresh. Don't forget to keep regular appointments with your family dentist. Unless we have said otherwise, it is important for you to have a checkup and cleaning every six months.

Brushing

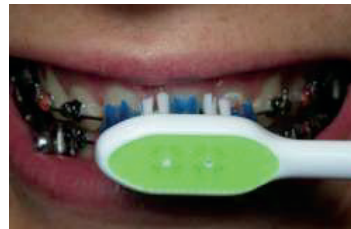
- Use a soft-bristle manual or electrical toothbrush.
- Brush once in the morning, once before you go to bed, and after every meal.
- If you cannot brush right away after meals, rinse well with water.



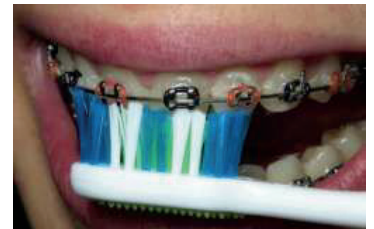
1. Use a dry brush with a small amount of toothpaste. Place bristles where gums and teeth meet.



2. Use circular, vibrating motions around the gum lines, 10 seconds on each tooth.



3. Brush slowly, each arch separately, every tooth.



4. Brush the lower teeth up and the upper teeth down. Brush your tongue and the roof of your mouth, too!

Flossing

- Floss nightly after brushing to remove plaque that might have been missed from brushing.
- Use a floss threader between gums and braces.



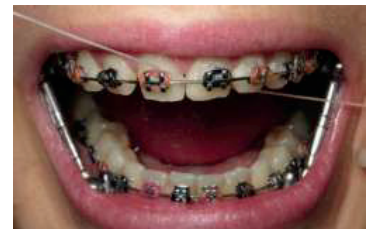
5. Carefully pull unwaxed floss between wire and braces. A floss threader may be helpful.



6. Floss carefully around the braces.



7. Floss carefully around the gum area.



8. Floss carefully around each tooth.