

Instructions for Braces

Congratulations on getting braces! Here is a what to guide on how to properly take care of them and what to expect.

It's important for you to know how to properly take care of your braces throughout your entire orthodontic care. The following will help aid you and provide answers to many 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.
- Be careful and avoid the foods listed under our "Eating With Braces" section to avoid unnecessary repair trips.
- You can eat and drink right away.
- 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 for one week as they toughen and become used to the braces.
- Place wax around any irritating bracket 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 in your teeth 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 the appliance.

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

Please modify the following:

- 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 - Small pieces only 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.

Instructions for Braces

Sweets and soft drinks 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, please rinse thoroughly with water.

Brushing 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, we'd like 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.



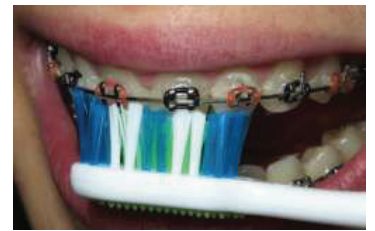
1. Use a dry brush with a small amount of toothpaste. Place bristles where gums and teeth meet.



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 your toothbrush misses.
- Use a floss threader between gums and braces.



5. Carefully pull unflossed 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.

Instructions for Braces

There are two categories of orthodontic emergencies:

- 1) Direct injury to the mouth and teeth **DURING** active orthodontic treatment
- 2) Problems with your braces **DURING** active orthodontic treatment.

Direct Injuries to the mouth and teeth:

- These injuries include a tooth being knocked out, severely displaced or fractured, etc.
- Please contact your regular family dentist immediately.
- If the orthodontic appliances are dislodged or displaced due to the injury, we will need to replace or adjust them. Please call our office after seeing your family dentist first.

Problems with orthodontic appliances:

Broken brackets, bent wires, or disrupted appliances can occur from time to time during your care. If there is any disturbance such as poking wires or broken appliances, please call our office as soon as possible so we can evaluate the urgency of the problem and schedule you accordingly.

Common Orthodontic Emergencies During Treatment:

- **Broken Braces:** This type of emergency can often wait until your next appointment. In the meantime, you can use a small piece of the wax provided to you if it is still irritating your gums. If discomfort continues, please call the office.
- **Poking Wires:** Cover the exposed wire with wax or tuck the wire in with a pencil eraser or cotton swab. If it is still irritating your tongue, gums, lips or cheeks please call the office.
- **Lost Elastic Ties:** This should not cause you any discomfort and does not typically require immediate replacement. Please call the office so that we can make note of this to replace at your next scheduled appointment.