



Congratulations on Getting Your Braces!

You are now on your way to having a bright new smile and improved bite. The following information will help answer any questions you may have during your orthodontic treatment.

What foods will I be able to eat?

You can eat almost any meal without damaging your appliances; however, sometime special care must be taken. We ask you to **avoid hard, chewy, crunchy, and sticky foods** because they are likely to loosen brackets and bend arch wires. Following these guidelines will help minimize the need for unnecessary repairs and will keep your time in braces on schedule.

Do not eat or chew:

- Caramel and gooey chocolate bars
- Very sticky or chunky peanut butter
- Hard candies
- Nuts
- Chewy candy, taffy, and gummy bears
- Popcorn
- Gum
- Raw, hard vegetables like carrots (eat cooked instead)
- Ice
- Pens/Pencils
- Fingernails

Use caution when eating:

- Chewy bread such as bagels – tear into small pieces and chew with your back teeth
- Chips – eat them carefully and one at a time.
- Corn on the cob– cut off the cob.
- Meat with bones- remove meat from bones.
- Apples– remove fruit from core and cut into small pieces.
- High sugar content foods and drinks should be avoided or limited, as too much sugar can cause tooth decay.

If you eat sugary foods brush your teeth or rinse your mouth out with water right away.

If a bracket becomes loose:

Please call the office and we will determine if you need a repair appointment sooner or if we will plan to repair the bracket at your next appointment.

If the loose bracket is still attached to the wire, please leave it. If the bracket is bothering you, put wax on it so it does not irritate your lips or gums. If the bracket comes off, **please save it, and bring it** in with you to your next appointment.



What happens if I have trouble with my wires?

It is possible that during treatment you may experience some difficulties with your arch wire. Here are some hints to help you until you can be seen in the office:

1. **Wire out of a molar tube** - Try to place wire back into the tube using tweezers. Place wax over wire.
2. **Rotated or shifted arch wire** - Try to slide the wire back around to the other side. If unsuccessful, place wax on the end of the wire.
3. **Poking wire** - Cover with wax or cotton.
4. **Broken wire** - Remove the broken portion of the wire if possible. Place wax over the exposed end.

Why are my teeth hurting?

After you have your braces placed you may feel discomfort later that evening or the next morning. This discomfort will usually last for 3-4 days and is a result of your teeth moving. Take whatever pain reliever you normally take and eat softer foods in the meantime.

Orthodontic Care & Instructions

Recommendations for the prevention of cavities and gum disease:

1. **Floss your teeth at least once daily.** This should be done before going to bed at night. Flossing at night will enable you to do a more thorough job because you have more time to do so. It is very important to remove all food and plaque that has been caught in your teeth and braces throughout the day. We provide you with a packet of floss threaders and floss to get you started. Additional quantities can be purchased at local stores or on Amazon.
2. **Brush your teeth after each time you eat.** This will be no less than 4 times each day. Brush after eating breakfast, lunch and dinner and before going to bed. If it is not possible to brush immediately after eating, brush your teeth as soon as the opportunity allows. Brush for no less than 2 minutes each time making sure that all areas of your teeth and braces are clean. Pay particular attention to the area around each bracket and close to the gum tissue as these are often missed. Use a mirror as often as possible; it will help you see areas you may be missing. Also, brushing your tongue will aid with fresh breath.
3. We recommend you **brush with a fluoride toothpaste and swish with ACT fluoride rinse daily.** Both can be found at the local drug store. The fluoride will protect the surface enamel of your teeth and help prevent cavities and decalcification (white spots).
4. It is imperative that you **maintain regular check-ups and cleaning appointments with your general dentist.** Cleanings should occur *at least* every 6 months during orthodontic treatment. If you need help, please ask. Our team is always willing to lend a hand.