

## Life with Braces

### Eating with Braces

What can you eat? Let's talk about whether you shouldn't eat! if you've been wanting to drop a few pounds, the first week wearing braces is just your chance! For the first day or so stick to soft foods, Avoid tough meats, hard breads, and raw vegetables, Before long, you'll be able to bite a cucumber again. But you'll need to protect your orthodontic appliances when you eat for as long as you're wearing braces.

### Foods to Avoid

- Chewy foods: bagels, hard rolls, licorice
- Crunchy foods: popcorn, ice, chips
- Sticky foods: caramels, gum
- Hard foods: nuts, candy
- Foods you have to bite into: corn on the cob, apples and carrots
- Chewing on hard things (for example, pens, pencils or fingernails) can damage the braces. Damaged braces will cause treatment to take longer.

### General Soreness

When you get your braces on, you may feel general soreness in your mouth and teeth may be tender to biting pressures for three to five days. This can be relieved by rinsing your mouth with a warm salt water mouthwash. Dissolve one teaspoonful of salt in 8 ounces of warm water, and rinse your mouth vigorously. If the tenderness is severe, take aspirin or whatever you normally take for headache or similar pain. The tips, cheeks and tongue may also become irritated for one to two weeks as they toughen and become accustomed to the surface of the braces. You can put wax on the braces to lessen this. We'll show you how!

### Loosening of teeth

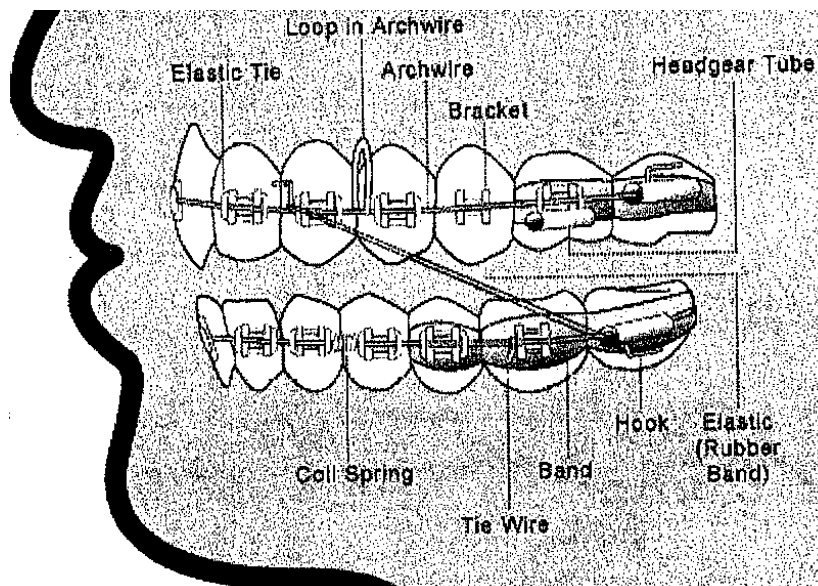
This is to be expected throughout treatment. Don't worry! Its normal. Teeth must loosen first so they can be moved. The teeth will again become rigidly fixed in their new — corrected — positions.

### Care of Appliances

To successfully complete the treatment plan, the patient must work together with the orthodontist. The teeth and jaws can only move toward their corrected positions if the patient consistently wears the rubber bands, headgear or other appliances as prescribed. Damaged appliances lengthen the treatment time.

### Brushing

It's more important than ever to brush and floss regularly when you have braces, so the teeth and gums are healthy after orthodontic treatment. Patients who do not keep their teeth clean may require more frequent visits to the dentist for a professional cleaning. Adults who have a history of gum disease should also see a periodontist during orthodontic treatment.



- Wear your retainers full time, until the doctor instructs otherwise.
- Take your retainers out when eating... and always put retainers in their case! (Most appliances are lost in school lunch rooms or restaurants.)
- Clean retainers thoroughly once a day with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Use warm but not hot water. Brushing retainers removes the plaque, and eliminates odors. Efferdent or other orthodontic appliance cleaners can be used, but do not take the place of brushing.
- When retainers are not in your mouth they should ALWAYS be in a retainer case. Pets love to chew on them.
- Initially, you may find it difficult to speak. Practice speaking, reading, or singing out loud to get used to them faster.
- Retainers are breakable, so treat them with care. If retainers are lost or broken call us immediately.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your retainers, or your retainers need adjusting, call us. Do not try to adjust them yourself.
- Always bring your retainers to your appointments.
- Retainer replacement are expensive... with proper care they will last for years
- Remove retainers when swimming.
- Keep retainers away from hot water, hot car dashboards, pockets, the washing machine, and napkins.

### **Removable Expander Instructions**

- Wear your expander all the time, that means all day, during meals, and while sleeping.
- Remove your expander only to brush your teeth. Brush your expander at least twice a day with a toothbrush and toothpaste.

### **Fixed Expander Instructions**

- Turn your expansion screws as Instructed. Insert the key into the hole and turn toward the arrow.
- If you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment, stop turning the expander.

### **Athletics**

If you play sports, it's Important that you consult us for special precautions. A protective mouth guard is advised for playing contact sports. In case of any accident involving the face, check your mouth and the appliances immediately. If teeth are loosened or the appliances damaged, phone at once for an appointment, In the meantime, treat your discomfort as you would treat any general soreness.

### **Loose Wire or Band**

Don't be alarmed if a wire or band comes loose. This happens occasionally. If wire protrudes and Is Irritating, use a blunt Instrument (back of spoon or the eraser end of a pencil) and carefully, gently push the irritating wire under the archwire. Simply get it out of the way. If Irritation to the lips or mouth continues, place wax or wet cotton on the wire to reduce the annoyance. Call our office as soon as possible for an appointment to check and repair the appliances. If any piece comes off, save it and bring it with you to the office.

### **Emergency Care**

As a general rule, an emergency appointment may be made when there Is severe pain, a loose band, a broken wire or something sticking out that you can't take care of. It's Important to know the names of the parts of your appliances. It will help, when you phone the office, to be able to identify what part is broken or out of place.