

Oral Hygiene

The use of dental floss is much more difficult with braces. Super floss which has a plastic end makes flossing easier.

Mouth rinses can be useful to dislodge some food but do not remove sufficient plaque to be a substitute for good brushing.

Thorough cleaning with a toothbrush is essential during treatment time. The **BRUSH** should be small and soft. You will wear your brush out more quickly, so replace more often! At least 5 minutes is required to brush thoroughly with full braces to remove dental plaque and this time should be taken in the morning and evening. The technique will be demonstrated to you.

Please note the following important tips:

- Spend 10 seconds on each tooth
- Brush firmly (don't scrub)
- Brush after all meals (inc snacks)

Elastics

If prescribed, it is essential that your elastics be worn exactly as explained. Unless told otherwise, the following should be noted:
The elastics should be worn **FULLTIME** and removed only for tooth brushing. Place the elastics around one of your fingers to remind you to replace it when you have finished brushing. One of the most common reasons for slow progress is poor elastic wear. If left off for even short periods of time the teeth can move rapidly "backwards"

Replace the elastics immediately if they break. Always carry some with you. Avoid playing with them as it will cause them to break and reduce the effectiveness of the elastics force. Wear the same pair for at least three days unless instructed otherwise.

Wax

You will be provided with a small packet of white wax. This may be useful if something breaks and feels sharp to get you by until the breakage can be repaired and is also useful if there is an ulcer at any stage during treatment. If any part of the braces feels sharp or is obviously sticking out it should be fixed but if there is an ulcer caused by constant rubbing of the insides of the lips/cheeks on the braces or by your face being knocked (eg playing sport) against the braces then the wax is useful to help encourage healing of the ulcer as soon as possible. Once an ulcer has formed it will take about a week to heal even if wax is used. The wax will help protect the healing ulcer, otherwise it could persist for weeks. Use the wax as directed, remove before eating or brushing and put some new wax on immediately afterwards. Keep your mouth clean to help prevent infection. If particularly uncomfortable, rinsing with warm salty water can help, as can one of the many ulcer preparations available from pharmacies.



Care For Your Fixed Appliance (Braces)



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To achieve a good result in the quickest possible time your cooperation during treatment is of paramount importance.

Please keep these notes for future
reference

The First Days

Within a day or so you will probably find that your teeth feel uncomfortable. The forces of the braces are very light, but as your teeth are not used to these forces you may feel discomfort. If the discomfort is bad enough some minor analgesics could be of benefit (Panadol). For the first few days or so you may wish to eat soft foods that are easy to chew (eg, Pasta, chicken, fish, well cooked vegetables rather than steak, crunchy vegetables, and tough bread crusts).

After adjustments (usually 4-6 weekly intervals) you may also find that your teeth could be uncomfortable for a day or two. Some people also experience occasional discomfort between visits that seems to “move” around the mouth. At the beginning of treatment your bite may feel uncomfortable because the upper teeth meet with the lower braces. During the treatment the bite will be corrected and will be very comfortable. The initial sudden changes in your bite will not affect eating (teeth rarely meet when you chew) but because you are very “tooth aware” in the first few days it will feel very strange. Particular care is required at this time to avoid broken brackets as only one or two lower brackets may make contact with the upper teeth. It is normal for teeth to feel a little “looser” as they move.

What Can Go Wrong

Please refer to the section on diet. Archwires cannot break by themselves and brackets cannot come unstuck so patient care to avoid breakages is extremely important.

Pin or ligature bent out: ease in with a match stick, or similar. Use wax if there is an ulcer (see section on wax).

Loose bracket: phone for an appointment so that the bracket can be replaced within a week. Use wax if the bracket feels sharp.

Broken archwire: phone for an appointment so that the archwire can be replaced within a week. If sharp use wax, the sharp end could be carefully bent over, if there is a small section at the back that is sharp it could be carefully removed.

Broken fixed elastic chain: phone for an appointment to have it replaced within a week (or use one of your removable elastics if this has been discussed with you).

Diet

1. Hard Sticky Foods

These should be totally avoided during the course of treatment as they are highly likely to result in damage to your braces. Examples include toffees, mints, hard lollies, museli bars, chewing gum, whole nuts, corn chips, barbeque shapes.

Diet cont....

2. Tough Hard Foods.

Can be eaten with care! Foods such as apples, raw celery, raw carrots should be cut into small pieces and chewed on your back teeth. Beware of hard pizza crust and hard crusty bread which should be cut or torn up. Don't chew corn on the cob or meat off the bone. As a rule of thumb food should not be harder than a hard boiled egg or soft pasta in consistency.

3. Sugar

No matter how well or how often you clean your teeth there will always be plaque around the braces and in other areas such as the fissures of your back teeth. Plaque is a bacterial film that continually grows on the teeth. **SUGAR** (especially sucrose cane sugar) is converted into ACID by dental plaque. The acid removes minerals from the tooth surface. This removal of minerals is reversible if there is enough time between sugar intake/acid attack. Therefore, sugar (special occasions) at meal times is safe, as long as there is STRICT AVOIDANCE of sugary snacks between meals.

AVOID SUCH FOODS AND DRINKS AS

Cakes, sweet biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, flavoured milks, cordial, yoghurts with added sugar, honey, jam. Basically foods that contain high amounts of sugar.

SUBSTITUTE WITH THE FOLLOWING

Drinks: Water, milk, diet cordials, unsweetened juices.

Food: Fruit, vegetables, cheese, bread with vegemite or sugar-free spreads, chips, savory biscuits.