

Congratulations!! You have just begun the process of straightening your teeth and improving your bite. This will lead to the lifelong benefit of a spectacular smile. Remember, we are a team in achieving our goals. Without your help, we will not be successful. Here is some important information regarding your braces. I like to call this my "Braces Survival Guide."

What to expect in the first few days

The dental adhesive used to attach your braces to your teeth takes 24 hours to completely harden. You can eat and drink right after your appointment but choose soft foods for comfort and to protect your braces.

Mild tooth discomfort may begin a few hours after the braces are placed and last (on average) up to three days. Over the counter pain relievers (similar to what would be taken for a headache) and/or soft diets can help with any initial soreness.

We are providing you with a helpful kit of tools to aid with keeping your braces clean and comfortable. You can find these tools at the local convenience stores.

Wax is used to cover areas that are causing irritation. The wax will stick best if the area is dry before application. The area can be dried with a Q-tip or tissue. Take a small piece of wax between your finger and thumb and roll it into a ball. Push the soft piece of wax on the area that is bothering you. If you accidentally swallow a small piece, that is ok, it will not hurt you.

Brushing with braces

Keeping your teeth and braces clean is one of the most important things that you can do to guarantee a good result. Poor oral hygiene can lead to increased treatment time, poor overall results, and staining and/or cavities on the teeth. Continue your regular appointments with your dentist, including the cleaning appointments at least every 6 months or as directed by your dentist/periodontist.

Brushing: Use soft bristle manual or electric toothbrush and a toothpaste that contains fluoride. This will aid in preventing decay, enamel calcification, and gingivitis. Brush after every meal. If you do not have time to brush, rinse your mouth with water. We recommend bringing your travel toothbrush we provide in your kit with you to brush while you're away from home.

Flossing: at least once a day. Use floss threaders, super floss, or floss picks (platypus). You will find samples in your tool kit.

Water Pik: This is a great aid, in addition to your brushing and flossing. It helps remove bacteria (plaque) and food debris between the teeth, braces, and appliances. It also massages the gums to make them strong and healthy.





Common Orthodontic Emergencies

Broken brackets, bent wires, or loose/broken appliances can occur during your care. If you have a poking wire or broken appliance, **please** call us as soon as possible so we can evaluate the urgency and schedule you accordingly. If you have an *after-hours emergency* that cannot be resolved after following the instructions provided, please call the office at **415-479-2400** for the on-call emergency number.

Broken braces: This type of emergency can often wait until your next appointment. In the meantime, save the loose bracket and call us to help determine urgency in repairing.

Poking wires: Cover the poking piece with wax or cut with a nail clipper. If either option does not eliminate the discomfort, please call our office.

Lost elastic ties: If it is not causing discomfort, it does not usually require immediate replacement. Please call the office so we can make note and help determine when to replace it.

Eating with Braces

Certain foods consistently damage orthodontic appliances by distorting wires, breaking brackets, and loosening cement. This can lengthen treatment time and increase costs.

- Avoid sticky foods, which can get caught in the braces. (*Marshmallows, gum, caramel, gummy candy, dried fruit*)
- Avoid chewing on hard foods or substances: *Ice cubes, pencils, pens, hard candy, nuts, tortilla chips.*
- Minimize *sweets and soft drinks* that can cause tooth decay along the edges of the braces. If you do not have the ability to brush after these treats, rinse your mouth with water.

Modify the following

- Hard fruits and vegetables- cut into thin, bendable slices
- Corn on the cob- cut off
- Remove meat from the bones
- Popcorn- be careful to avoid kernels

Food suggestions for your first few days:

- Eggs, oatmeal, yogurt
- Soft breads, tortillas, pancakes, muffins, pasta, rice
- Ground beef, shredded chicken
- Smoothies and any cold treats- the cold temperature helps with soreness!
- Mashed potatoes, steamed vegetables
- Noodle dishes (macaroni and cheese, Ramen, Spaghetti, Ravioli)

