

Oral Hygiene with Braces



Oral hygiene with braces

When you have braces, it's very important to brush and floss after every meal in order to keep your teeth and gums healthy throughout your treatment. If you need help choosing the right toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss, please ask us and we can help you choose the right products for your teeth and your appliance.

You'll also need to be careful about what you eat to prevent breaking your braces or bending the wires.

Step 1 :



Step 3 :



Step 5 :



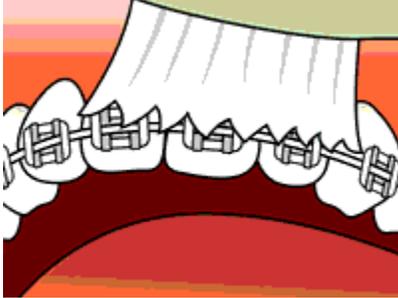
Step 2 :



Step 4 :

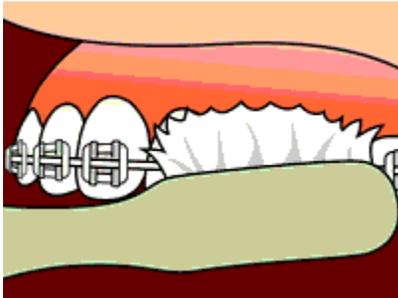


~ **Brushing instructions;**



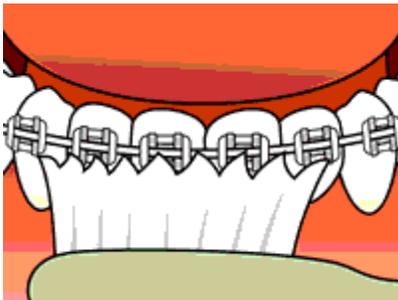
Brushing: step 1

Place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to your gum so the bristles of your toothbrush go under the archwire and between your teeth.



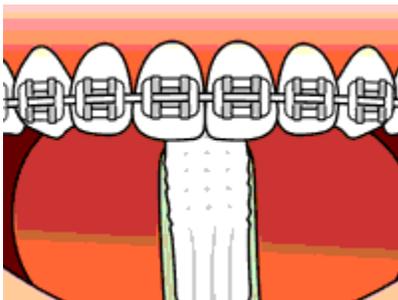
Brushing: step 2

Brush gently in a circular motion trying to clean each individual tooth. Angle both down into the braces as well as up into the braces.



Brushing: step 3

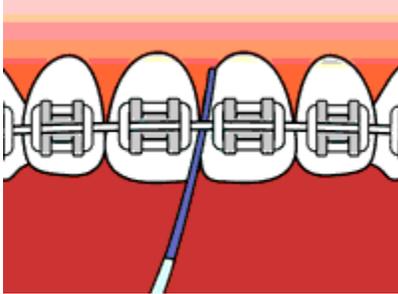
Brush the outer, inner, and chewing surfaces of each tooth.



Brushing: step 4

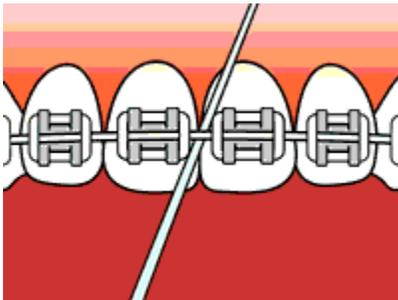
Use the tip of your brush for the inner surface of your front teeth.

~ Flossing instructions;



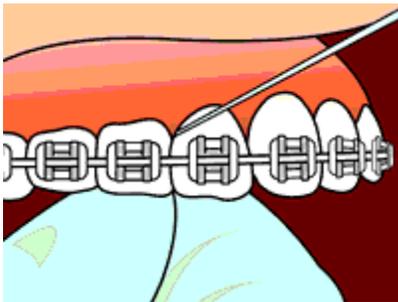
Flossing: step 1

Wind about 18 inches of floss around your fingers as shown. Most of it should be wrapped around one finger, and as the floss is used, the other finger takes it up.



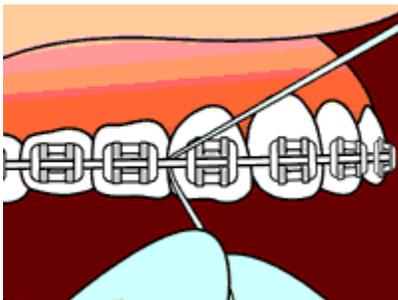
Flossing: step 2

Use your thumbs and forefingers to guide about one inch of floss between your teeth.



Flossing: step 3

Holding the floss tightly gently saw it between your teeth. Then curve the floss into a C-shape against one tooth and gently slide it beneath your gums.



Flossing: step 4

Slide the floss up and down, repeating for each tooth.



~ Eating with Braces

What can you eat? When braces are first placed, or after an orthodontic adjustment, your teeth will be sore when you chew. Stick to soft foods and consider meals such as soup, pasta, pancakes, eggs, macaroni and cheese, etc. After a few days, you'll be eating a pretty normal diet again.

There are foods, however, that can damage your braces. Hard, sticky, chewy, or crunchy foods can bend your archwires or cause brackets and bands to come loose from your teeth. This can cause unwanted tooth movement and lengthen your treatment.

Please avoid the following:

- All gum (even sugarless)
- Chewing on ice
- Sticky, chewy candy (Starbursts, Fruit Rollups, Skittles, Now-N-Laters, Air Heads, Tootsie Rolls, Milk Duds, Gummy Bears, Gummy Worms, Fruit by the Foot, caramels, licorice, taffy, etc.)
- Chewing on hard candy (Jolly Ranchers, jaw breakers, candy canes, lollipops, peanut brittle, toffee, etc.)
- Hard rolls, french bread, & bagels
- Deep dish pizza crust
- Granola bars
- Large pretzels (hard or soft)
- Bagel chips, pita chips, or other hard chip snacks
- Popcorn that is not fully popped
- Caramel apples
- Raw carrots (slice them thin)
- Corn on the cob (cut kernels off the cob)
- Whole apples (slice them into thin wedges)
- Biting into very hard ice cream

Also, please do not chew on pens, pencils, fingernails, or other hard objects.

Please use your common sense when deciding which foods you should eat and those to be avoided.

If your band or bracket comes completely off, keep it in a safe place and bring it with you to the office. If you are wearing headgear or elastics attached to a loose band or bracket, stop wearing them until we perform the repair. If a band or bracket comes loose, please call us to let us know, even if you notice something is broken the day of your appointment, as it is not always possible to repair appliances at your regular appointment without prior warning. This is because additional time is needed in the schedule to reattach the loose portion of your braces. **Please do not arrive for an appointment with a loose bracket or band without having called us in advance to inform us.** We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.



Emergency Care

True orthodontic emergencies are very rare, but when they do occur we are available to help you. As a general rule, you should call the office when you experience severe pain or when you have a painful appliance problem that you can't take care of yourself. We'd be happy to schedule an appointment to resolve the problem.

You might be surprised to learn that you may be able to temporarily solve many problems yourself until you schedule an appointment with our office. If you need to call the office with an emergency or problem, it will be helpful to know the names of the parts of your appliances so you can identify what part is broken or out of place.



Tooth Soreness

Teeth will be tender to biting pressures at times during orthodontic treatment. This is normal after braces are placed and following adjustments. The tenderness will significantly diminish within 3 or 4 days. Soreness 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. Eat soft foods for the first few days. Eating warm soup or drinking hot liquids after an adjustment will also help reduce tooth soreness. Take Tylenol, Advil or whatever you would take for a headache to help alleviate any discomfort.

Irritated Cheeks, Lips, or Tongue

Brackets may irritate soft tissues initially until the tissues toughen (like your feet if you start to walk barefoot). We provide wax, which can be placed onto the braces until the adjacent cheek or lip area heals. Pinch off a small piece of wax, roll it between your fingers to warm it and soften it, then place it directly over the sharp wire, bracket, or band. If you have no wax, place a small piece of a cotton ball over the sharp part of your braces. We do not recommend



chewing gum while wearing braces, but in a pinch, a piece of sugarless gum can be carefully chewed to soften it, then placed over the offending wire, if wax or cotton do not work. Orabase topical anesthetic gel can be applied directly on the sore spot on the cheek, lip or tongue to numb it and make it feel better. Rinsing with warm salt water can also help relieve some of the discomfort.

Loose Bracket or Band

Generally, loose brackets or bands do not require immediate reattachment, but should be repaired within several days. Simply leave us a voice mail message, and we will return your call when the office is open to schedule the repair. It is also OK to wait for regular office hours to call our office to plan the repair, unless you are experiencing pain. If your band or bracket comes completely off, keep it in a safe place and **bring it with you to the office**. If you are wearing headgear or elastics attached to a loose band or bracket, stop wearing them until we perform the repair. **If a band or bracket comes loose, please call us to let us know**, even if you notice something is broken the day of your appointment, as it is not always possible to repair appliances at your regular appointment without prior warning. This is because additional time is needed in the schedule to reattach the loose portion of your braces. **Please do not arrive for an appointment with a loose bracket or band without having called us in advance to inform us. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.**

Broken or Poking Archwire

If a broken wire can be removed easily, remove the broken piece. If a wire slips out of its tube, replace the wire back in the tube or under the tube hook by using tweezers. If the wire still pokes, slide it to the opposite side, or cover the wire with wax, a cotton ball or gauze. Call our office for an appointment before additional problems develop.

Poking Ligature Wire

Tuck the poking wire under with a pencil eraser. If this is not possible, cover it with wax, cotton ball or gauze and call for an appointment.

Lost Separator

If you are unable to place the separator back in yourself, give the office a call and we will replace it. If a separator comes out over the weekend, it is OK to wait to call the office on Monday for replacement then. A lost separator would not require an emergency visit to the office if the office is closed.



Loose Teeth

Loose teeth are to be expected throughout treatment. Don't worry! It's normal. Teeth must loosen first so they can be moved. The teeth will again become firm in their new, corrected positions.

Soft Tissue Impingement

Call our office for an appointment to relieve the offending portion of the appliance. You may be able to pull a hook or loop out (or push it in) to relieve discomfort.

Gums Bleed When Brushing

Inadequate tooth brushing causes your gums to swell up and bleed, an infection called gingivitis. Bleeding means you need to brush more effectively and to floss as well. After the gums regain their health, they will no longer be sore or bleed. Refer to Tooth brushing with Braces for detailed instructions. Be sure to continue to see your family dentist at least every 6 months (or more frequently as your dentist recommends) for regular cleanings, examinations and fluoride treatments.

Removable Appliance or Retainer Does Not Fit

If these appliances are not worn regularly as prescribed, they will not fit properly and your teeth could move in the wrong direction. If you are unable to wear your appliance, treatment length will be extended, as you will not be making the progress you should. Call for an appointment right away for adjustment.

Staining of Clear Brackets or Power Chain

Avoid coffee, tea, mustard, curry, spaghetti sauce, dill pickle juice, and all tobacco products. Our clear ceramic brackets themselves will not stain, but the power chain can discolor. Don't worry, the power chain will be replaced at your next appointment.

Trouble Turning Expander

We should see you if you are unsure about turning or if you are having trouble turning your expander. We want to be certain that you are turning it correctly and that the appliance is working properly. Please call us.

Loose Expander

If your expander seems loose and not well attached to all the teeth, stop turning the expander until we can recement it. Call right away for an appointment.



Traumatic Accidents

Use ice immediately to reduce swelling. If the teeth are displaced and don't fit together properly, archwires are bent, or soft tissue is impaled on the braces, schedule an appointment immediately in our office, with your general dentist, or oral surgeon. If a tooth is knocked completely out of your mouth, **do not scrub** the root. Simply rinse any dirt off the tooth with fresh water and replace it back in the tooth socket **as soon as possible**. Call immediately for an emergency appointment with your dentist.

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(708) 403-3900

Orland Park (24hr)

10 Orland Square Dr.
Orland Park, IL 60462
(708) 966-2067

Burbank

5501 West 79th St
Burbank, IL 60459
(708) 424-5901

Elgin

373 Summit St
Elgin, IL 60123
(847)457-1010

Stone Park

1550 North Manheim Rd
Stone Park, IL 60165
(708)338-4444

Pulaski

4445 North Pulaski Rd
Chicago, IL 60631
(773)961-8555

Hyde Park

1634 East 53rd St
Chicago, IL 60615
(773)966-6465



Retainer Instructions



Retainers are used to hold (or retain) your teeth in place after braces are removed and are an essential part of successful orthodontic treatment. Retainers are needed because teeth have fibers that help them attach to the bone. As teeth are moved by your braces, these fibers get stretched. The fibers want to pull the teeth back to their old positions when the orthodontic force is removed. Retainers help prevent this and allow time for the fibers to reorganize into their new positions. The longer retainers are worn, the less likely your teeth will relapse or move.

Cooperation with wearing retainers after your braces come off is absolutely essential, otherwise your teeth will get crowded again.



- Wear your retainers full time (except while eating, brushing, or playing sports), until Dr. instructs otherwise. Usually after 6 months of consistent full time wear, you will be able to safely wear your retainers only at night. As time goes on, the wearing schedule is reduced to every other night, then 2 nights a week, then eventually one night a week. Even after several years have passed since your braces have been removed, **do not stop wearing your retainers altogether.** You may only need to wear them one night a week, but **if you stop completely, your teeth will move!**
- Always bring your retainers to your appointments, even if you are only wearing your retainers at night. Dr. wants to check them to make sure they fit properly.
- Take your retainers out when eating... and **always put retainers in their case!** Many appliances are accidentally thrown away in school lunch rooms or restaurants when the



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case is not used and the retainers have been wrapped in a Kleenex, napkin, or paper towel.

- Clean retainers thoroughly at least once a day with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Use warm (not hot) water. Brushing retainers removes the plaque, eliminates odors, and reduces the chance of buildup on the retainers. Efferdent or other orthodontic appliance cleaners should also be used once or twice a week, but they 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 retainers!



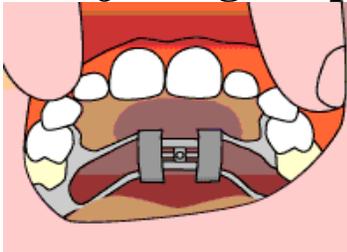
- Initially, you may find it difficult to speak. Practice speaking, reading, or singing out loud to get used to them faster.
- Retainers are breakable, so treat them with care. If retainers are lost or broken, call us immediately to arrange for a replacement, as otherwise your teeth will shift.
- If you have questions or concerns about your retainers, or your retainers need adjusting, call us. Do not try to adjust them yourself.
- Retainer replacement is expensive as they are handmade, custom appliances. With proper care they will last for years!
- Remove retainers when swimming or playing contact sports. Put them in their case!
- Keep retainers away from hot water, hot car dashboards, and the washing machine.
- Never put the retainers loose in your pocket or purse without being in their case, as they will likely be damaged. Never wrap them in a Kleenex or napkin, or they will get thrown away accidentally!

Even after several years have passed since your braces have come off, do not stop wearing your retainers altogether. You may only need to wear them one night a week at that point, but **if you stop wearing them completely your teeth will move.**

Palatal Expander

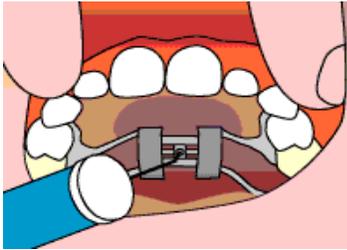
The palatal expander “expands” (or widens) your upper jaw by putting gentle pressure on your upper molars each time an adjustment is made. The animation below will instruct you about when and how to adjust your expander. When you achieve the desired expansion, you will wear the appliance for several months to solidify the expansion and to prevent regression.

~ Adjusting the palatal expander;



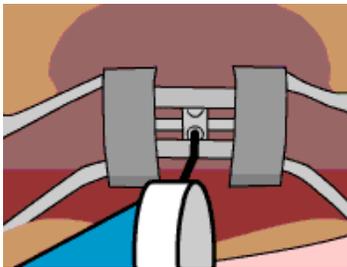
Step 1

In a well-lit area, tip the patient’s head back.



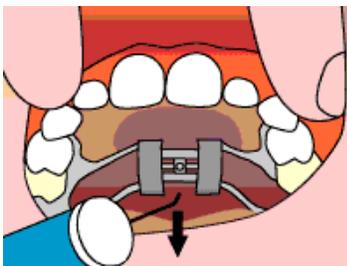
Step 2

Place the key in the hole until it is firmly in place.



Step 3

Push the key toward the back of the mouth. You will notice the fender will rotate and the new hole will appear. The rotation stops when the key meets the back of the expander.



Step 4

Push back and down toward the tongue, and remove the key. The next hole for insertion of the key should now be visible.