Orthodontics – Wearing Braces

Braces are appliances that move your or your child’s teeth into the correct position. Braces are made of metal or ceramic (clear) brackets, wires, and/or rubber bands.

Keep your braces clean

- It is very important to keep the braces, teeth, and gums clean while the braces are in place. Poor brushing or flossing will cause plaque to build up around the brackets. The plaque will cause cavities, decalcification (white or brown spots), and gingivitis (puffy, red gums).
- Brush your teeth for two minutes, 2 times a day, using a fluoride toothpaste.
- We encourage brushing after all meals. If you are not able to brush your teeth at school, be sure to rinse your mouth with water after eating.
- Floss your teeth one time every day.
- Your orthodontist or dentist may prescribe a high-fluoride toothpaste for use while you are in braces.

Foods to avoid

Braces are strong, but they can be damaged by certain foods. Do not eat these foods:

- Sticky foods - caramels, chewy candies, and gum
- Crunchy foods - chips, ice, popcorn, and raw vegetables
- Hard foods - nuts, pretzels, hard or crusty breads, dried meat and dried fruit
- Foods that you bite with front teeth - whole apples, raw carrot sticks and corn on the cob
Foods to eat
There are many foods you can enjoy while in braces. **We encourage these types of foods:**
- Dairy – soft cheeses, pudding, and yogurt
- Grains – soft tortillas, sandwich bread, pancakes, rice, and pasta
- Meat and seafood – ground, shredded, or cut from bone in small pieces
- Vegetables – mashed potatoes, steamed veggies, beans, corn removed from cob
- Fruits – berries, grapes, applesauce, bananas and oranges
- Treats – ice cream, milkshakes, smoothies, cake

Life with braces
Speaking and eating with braces will become easier over time. You can still do most or all activities with braces. This includes playing sports and playing a musical instrument. We recommend that you wear a mouth guard to protect your teeth and appliances during most sports. **Even with proper care and precautions, braces can become loose or broken during eating or activities.**
- Ask your orthodontist or assistant to help you find the right mouth guard for you.
- You may find it helpful to place wax over sore areas and places in the mouth that are poked or rubbed by your braces.
- **If appliances become loose or broken, please contact our office.**

Adjusting the braces
You or your child will have the braces adjusted by the orthodontist every 4 to 8 weeks. It is normal to feel some discomfort after each adjustment. This can last for 24 to 48 hours.
- You may take over-the-counter pain medicine like Ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) or Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) if the pain is moderate to severe. Follow the dosage directions on the bottle based on your or your child’s weight.
- Before leaving each adjustment appointment, check around your mouth for anything poking your lips, tongue, gums or cheeks. Tell your assistant if anything feels uncomfortable before you leave.

Routine dental care
Keep regular (non-orthodontic) dental care appointments during treatment with braces.
- You will need to have a dental cleaning and exam every six months with your general or pediatric dentist.

If you do not have a dentist, please let us know and we can help you find one.