



Dental: Wearing Braces

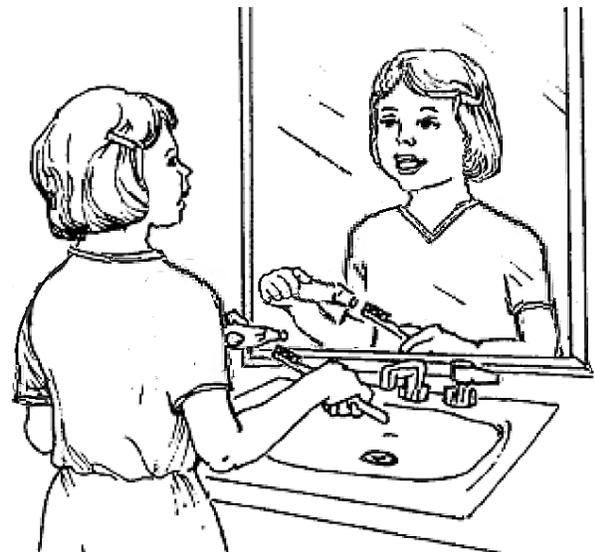
Now that you have braces, your mouth will feel very strange and different. You may have some discomfort during the first few days. Your teeth may feel loose and you may be biting differently. Your jaws may ache also. This is natural and you should not become too concerned or worried.

Teeth and Gums

Now that you have your braces, keeping your teeth clean and gums well stimulated (brushed) will be your most important job (**Picture 1**).

Brushing your teeth and gums is important because:

- It prevents tooth decay.
- Puffy, un-brushed gums grow over the orthodontic bands and slow the orthodontic tooth movement. This causes pain and discomfort during treatment or adjustments. Your appointments will take longer and your total treatment time may be 6 months to 1 year longer than it needs to be.
- A dirty mouth causes bad breath.
- Well brushed teeth and stimulated gums mean **less** discomfort, shorter appointments and shorter total treatment time.



Picture 1 Keep your teeth and gums well brushed.

Foods to Avoid

Continue to eat normal healthful foods, but avoid food that can damage your braces. It is not the food you eat, but how you eat things. Be careful with all hard and chewy foods.

Foods to Eat

- Do continue to eat celery, raw carrots and apples that are cut into bite-size pieces.
- Remove corn from the cob before eating.

Dental Care

- **Before leaving each appointment, remember to always check your mouth for anything sticking or poking your lips, gums or cheeks. Have the dentist fix this before you leave.**
- Please read and follow the instructions in Helping Hand HH-IV-59: *Dental: Brushing with Braces*.
- If you are not able to brush your teeth at school, be sure to rinse well after eating and then brush when you get home.
- You will need to schedule appointments with the dental hygienist every six months while the braces are on.

If you have any other questions about braces, be sure to ask your dentist or dental assistant, or call _____.