

## Rubber Band Wear

To successfully complete orthodontic treatment, you must work together with your orthodontist. The teeth and jaws can only move toward their corrected positions if the patient consistently wears the rubber bands or other appliances as prescribed. Lack of cooperation with following instructions and damaging appliances lengthen the treatment time, so please follow instructions.

## Athletics & Braces

If you play sports, it's important you let us know. A protective mouthguard is provided for playing contact sports with braces.

## Recommended Foods with Braces

Maintaining a healthy, nutritious diet is important for oral health and overall health. The healthier your body is, the better the results of your orthodontic treatment. A proper diet provides essential nutrients to bones and tissues while undergoing significant change during braces treatment.

- Cheese
- Mashed potatoes
- Yogurt
- Light crackers
- PB & J
- Eggs
- Hullless popcorn
- Bananas, grapes, oranges, strawberries, and other soft fruits without pits
- Ravioli, spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, and other noodles

## Foods to Avoid with Braces

Although braces have become sturdier with modern technology, it's still important to be careful not to damage them. Certain foods can damage braces components such as wires, rubber bands, or the bracket itself. Generally, avoid all foods that are sticky, hard, or chewy. Soft foods are recommended when wearing braces because they are more gentle on braces hardware.

Read the list of recommended foods with braces, as well as the following list of foods to avoid during braces treatment:

- Popcorn
- Nuts
- Hard taco shells
- Sticky and hard candy
- Gum
- Doritos
- Ice
- Corn chips
- Pretzels
- Hard cookies or crackers
- Sticky or hard chocolate

Try to avoid biting into hard foods with your front teeth. When possible, cut up these hard foods into smaller pieces:

- Raw vegetables
- Croutons
- French/Italian bread
- Fruit
- Hard rolls
- Thin crust pizza
- Meat
- Burgers
- Sub sandwiches
- Corn on the cob



## Patient Education Brochure

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If you have any questions after reading through this brochure please don't hesitate to contact us!

## Keep your Braces Clean!

Plaque needs to be thoroughly removed from your teeth a couple of times a day, and it's even more important to remove plaque when you have braces. Brackets and wires create places for plaque to hide. Plaque is a bacterial biofilm that attaches to braces and teeth, it causes cavities, swollen gums, bad breath, and permanent stains on your teeth. Read on to learn best practices for maintaining good oral hygiene with braces.

### When You Should Clean Your Braces

You should brush your teeth after every time you eat. If you don't have a toothbrush available, then at least rinse your mouth out with water. Swoosh the water around really well and spit the water out. If you can, make sure to carry a travel toothbrush with you to school or work. Also, be sure to clean between your teeth with floss **at least** once every day.

Make sure to see your dentist regularly every 6 months, or more often if your orthodontist recommends it. Your dentist and hygienist will not only help remove tartar from hard-to-reach places, but will also make sure all the brackets and wires are staying clean and working effectively. They can also answer any questions you have regarding brushing, flossing, and tips for cleaning braces in any area of your mouth that are difficult to reach. We suggest you coordinate dental cleaning appointments with your orthodontic adjustment appointments. We will be happy to schedule your appointment so that your wires can be removed prior to seeing the dentist. After the cleaning wires can be replaced to continue orthodontic treatment.

## Potential Hygiene Issues with Braces

Braces help teeth to be straighter and healthier. However, braces can also let food and plaque build-up between brackets and under wires easily, so it's important to maintain a proper oral hygiene routine during orthodontic treatment.

Braces make cleaning teeth a little more difficult, which can prevent people from brushing & flossing as often as needed. However, it's very important to maintain a proper oral hygiene routine to ensure that you don't allow your teeth to contract these potential hygiene issues:

**Gingivitis** (gum disease): The first stage of periodontal disease. It's usually painless, but signs like bleeding, or swollen gums are symptoms. Gingivitis occurs when plaque builds up around the gum line, so make sure to massage your gums lightly when brushing, and floss diligently.

**Periodontitis:** If not treated, gingivitis can lead to periodontitis, infection and inflammation in the gums that spreads to the ligaments and bone that support the teeth. With periodontitis, the gums start to pull away from the teeth, forming gaps or pockets between teeth that allow for more plaque to accumulate.

**Decalcifications:** Sometimes called "white spots," are white stain marks around braces. Lines and spots from decalcification remain on your teeth for life, so the best way to avoid them is to not let them develop by brushing twice a day, every day.

## General Information

### General Soreness With Braces

When you get your braces, your teeth may be tender to biting pressures for 3 – 5 days. If a painkiller is necessary, we recommend tylenol vs Ibuprofen or Motrin, but you can take whatever you normally take for headache or discomfort. The lips, cheeks and tongue may also become irritated for one to two weeks as they toughen and become accustomed to the braces. We will supply wax to put on the braces in irritated areas to lessen discomfort.

### Loosening Of Teeth

This is to be expected throughout treatment. Don't worry! It's normal. Teeth must loosen so they can move. The teeth will firm up in their new corrected positions after treatment is completed.

### Loose Wire Or Band On Your Braces

Don't be alarmed if a wire or band comes loose. This happens occasionally. If a wire sticks out and is irritating, use a blunt instrument (eraser end of a pencil) and carefully tuck in the irritating wire if you can. Simply get it out of the way. If irritation to the lips or mouth continues, place wax or wet cotton on the wire to reduce the annoyance. Call our office as soon as possible for an appointment to check and repair the problem.