



Congratulations on your new braces! You are one step closer to the smile you deserve.

You may find that over the next few days your teeth and gums may be sore and you'll produce more saliva. Teeth will feel loose as they move. It's normal and expected throughout treatment. The teeth will again become rigidly fixed in their new corrected position at the end of treatment.

Here are a few helpful hints to make the transition smoother as you get to know your new appliance.

Eating and Foods to Avoid

For the first day or so after you get your braces or appliance, or after an adjustment, eat soft foods. This will greatly increase your comfort level. After that you can go back to your regular diet. However, **there are certain foods that you need to avoid** while you have your braces. These foods can cause your brackets to come off of your teeth, which will increase the time it takes to finish your treatment.

- Ice (even if you're careful)
- Hard candy (like Jolly Ranchers)
- Candy bars
- Gum of any kind
- Crunchy chips (like Doritos)
- Do not bite into whole carrots, apples, pears, etc.; these should be cut into small pieces first
- Stay away from the bottom of the popcorn bag - the hard kernels are really bad news - even without braces
- Meat should not be chewed off the bone - it should be cut off
- Corn of the cob should be sliced off
- Pizza crust, bagels, and French bread should be broken into bite-sized pieces
- Do not chew on pens, pencils, and fingernails, as they will also damage your braces

Brushing and Flossing

Always practice good oral hygiene. **Brush and floss your teeth at least twice a day**, make sure to brush your teeth above and below your braces. Brush on the biting surface of your teeth and the inner surfaces. Brush your upper and lower gums, the roof of your mouth and your tongue. You should be brushing your teeth for at least 3 minutes each time you brush. Using a Water-flosser daily will help maintain your teeth and gums healthy throughout your treatment. You can use warm salt water in your Water-flosser to help control bacteria levels.

Broken Bracket

If you have a loose bracket, please **call the clinic** to arrange a visit to replace it. Carefully place wax over the bracket and wire so it does not flip around or scratch your lips.

Discomfort/Pain

You may experience general soreness once your braces are put on or when you come for adjustments. The discomfort should go away quickly. Your lips, cheeks and tongue may also become irritated for 1 to 2 weeks as they become accustomed to your braces.

If your wire is causing any discomfort, you can use a nail clipper to cut off the extra wire. You can also use wax to avoid any irritation. Shape the wax into a small ball, dry the area where you want to place the wax, and press the wax around the wire and/or bracket. Repeat this as often as needed.

You can swish warm salt water for 60 seconds twice a day to reduce irritation and alleviate some of the soreness. If the tenderness continues after trying these steps, you can take acetaminophen (Tylenol) according to the package directions. **Do not take ibuprofen (Advil) because it will delay tooth movement.**

Sports

If you play contact sports, it is important that you **use a protective mouthguard**. In case of any accident involving your face, please check your mouth and appliances immediately. If any teeth are loosened or the appliances are damaged, please call us to schedule an appointment.

Maintaining Appointments Regularly

Your orthodontist will want to see you **frequently**, sometimes every month, to make sure your braces are exerting steady pressure on your teeth. Frequently damaged appliance and changing or canceling appointments can lengthen the treatment time and increase your time in braces.



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