

All orthodontic appliances have a tendency to trap particles of food and collect plaque. You will notice that it is much harder to keep your teeth clean when wearing orthodontic appliances. This makes brushing and flossing even more important to prevent the buildup of plaque, which produces gum inflammation and tooth decay.

- Clean your teeth and braces with fluoride toothpaste and a small soft toothbrush immediately after each meal. Your braces should shine and your gums should remain pink and firm and not bleed during brushing.
- Interdental toothbrushes can clean underneath and around your wires and braces making them great at getting to the difficult places.
- If practical floss at least once a day. The floss needs to be first threaded under the arch wire before going between your teeth. Then floss up and down the sides of the teeth.
- Superfloss from Oral-B is excellent for threading between the teeth which have spaces and also for flossing fixed retainer wires.
- Disclosing Tablets can help you see plaque and improve the quality of your brushing and flossing.



Pictures courtesy ASO site: www.aso.org.au

Diet, decay and breakages

It is important during orthodontic appliance care that you do not

- Chew pens
- Open water bottles with your teeth
- Bite your finger nails
- Fiddle with your appliances

You should avoid foods and soft drinks that are acidic and/or high in sugar as they promote tooth decay. You will also need to avoid hard, sticky or crunchy foods as they can pull brackets off and bend wires which will slow your treatment. Remember to check your appliance regularly for anything loose or bent.

Remember

- NO sticky lollies such as minties, fantaes, redskins, starburst, toffee
- NO hard biscuits such as ginger snaps, Anzac biscuits
- NO pork crackling, crusty bread, hard nuts

- NO hard biscuits such as ginger snaps, Anzac biscuits
- NO pork crackling, crusty bread, hard nuts
- NO chewing meat off bones or corn off the cob
- NO chewing ice
- CUT up apples and raw carrots

We recommend that you see your dentist every 6 months for a dental check-up and fluoride application

Orthodontic Emergencies

Orthodontic emergencies occur occasionally and although they may be a little upsetting for the patient and parents, they are usually fairly simple to treat. For some emergencies, you may need to contact our office for assistance.

Lost Separators

Many patients lose a separator at the start of treatment. Do not worry as it is normally the result of the space opening. If you lose a separator contact the surgery so we can assess what action to take.

Discomfort

It is normal for a patient to have discomfort for a few days after braces are fitted or adjusted. It can make eating uncomfortable, especially on harder foods. This discomfort is both normal and temporary. If the patient is allowed to have over-the-counter pain relievers, then a regular dose would normally be effective.

Food Caught Between Teeth

This is not an emergency, but can be a little uncomfortable or embarrassing for the patient. It is easily fixed with a piece of dental floss or use an interproximal brush or toothpick to dislodge food caught between teeth and braces.

Mouth Ulcers

Some patients are susceptible to episodes of mouth ulcers. While braces do not cause them, they may be precipitated or exacerbated by an irritation from braces. One or several areas of ulceration of the cheeks, lips or tongue may appear. This is not an emergency, but may be very uncomfortable for the patient. Prompt relief may be achieved by applying a small amount of topical anesthetic (such as Orabase or Ora-Gel) directly to the ulcerated surface using a cotton swab. This should be reapplied as needed. Warm salt water mouth rinses are also very helpful.

Irritation of Lips or Cheeks

New braces can be irritating to the mouth, especially when the patient is eating. A small amount of non-medicinal relief wax makes an excellent buffer between the metal and mouth. Simply pinch off a small piece and roll it into a ball the size of a small pea. Flatten the ball and place it completely over the area of the braces causing irritation. Sugarless chewing gum is similarly very useful.

Wire Irritations

Occasionally the end of a wire will work itself out of place and irritates the mouth. Often the discomfort caused by a wire can be resolved by moving the wire away from the irritated area. If the wire will not move, try covering the end of it with a small amount of wax or sugarless chewing gum. In a situation where the wire is extremely bothersome you may clip the wire using a pair of wire cutters or sharp nail clippers. Of course contact our surgery if you need any advice or need to be seen to correct the problem.

A Loose Bracket

Brackets are the part of braces attached to teeth with a special adhesive. The bracket can be knocked off for various reasons. Loose brackets may be rotated on the wire back into place until an appointment can be arranged.