

ORAL HYGIENE INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Food Precautions:** Foods to avoid are the hard, crunchy and sticky such as: peanut brittle, jujubes, candy apples, skittles, toffee, half popped popcorn kernels, unshelled sunflower seeds. Do not chew ice, hard candies or the end of a pen or pencil. Cut raw apples into halves or quarters. Also you may want to peel apples as the skins tend to get trapped around the braces. Cut carrots into strips or small pieces. Foods that tend to become trapped more easily around the braces than others are: alfalfa sprouts, lettuce, coconut, corn on the cob, white bread, raw vegetables such as cauliflower and broccoli. If you are unable to brush your teeth immediately after eating take a sip of whatever you are drinking and swish it around to dislodge some of the trapped food, and then brush as soon as it is convenient.

For the next three or four days after getting the braces on, avoid any foods that will stain your fingers or the kitchen counter such as cheesies, curry, colored Gatorade, packaged chicken noodle soup, mustard, beets, fruit flavoured pop, grape juice, black tea or coffee. In general avoid foods that have had dye added. Do not use the disclosing tablets that are in your folder till after the first week.

2. **Discomfort of teeth:** Following the initial bonding appointment, teeth will vary in degree of discomfort for the first week. It will be the most and the longest that your teeth will be uncomfortable throughout your treatment. Following each appointment your teeth may be sensitive for a day or two. You might need to eat softer foods that do not require as much chewing such as chicken, fish, pastas, chili, cooked vegetables rather than raw, bread instead of toast. When you chew you will be putting pressure on teeth that are already sensitive and the softer the foods, the less discomfort you will have while chewing. Tooth brushing may even be a problem the first week due to sensitive teeth. Using warm water or sensodyne tooth past will help.

Medication may be required for the discomfort. Use medication you usually use at home for headaches, aches and pains. During the day you normally keep busy and are not as aware of the discomfort. At bedtime you may be more aware of your teeth being uncomfortable and may need medication at that time.

Initially your teeth may not close together at the back because of the positioning of the braces. When you close there is the possibility of knocking or biting a bracket off. Braces are placed in such a way to move the teeth in the proper direction, unfortunately not for patient comfort. In time, as your teeth move, this problem will correct itself.

- 3. Toothbrushing Instructions:** Brush across the gums and the braces in small circles, being careful not to scrub side to side. The first row of bristles is then worked under the wire. For the top teeth, work the bristles down, and the bottom teeth work the bristles up. Brush the inside of the teeth and biting surface normally. Your tongue also has lots of bacteria on its surface so brush it every time you brush your teeth. Generally, you brush the gums, braces and under the wire to clean the teeth.

Proxabrush: The proxabrush is a great little tool for close-up cleaning between the braces and under the wires. Work the proxabrush in little “boxes or squares” around each bracket and under all hooks. Use your proxabrush at least once a day, every day.

Rubber Tip Stimulator: The rubber tip stimulator aids in disrupting the bacteria that accumulates around the gums and between your teeth. It also massages and stimulates the gums to keep them tight and healthy. Use the tip to trace along the gum line on both the inside and outside of your teeth. Also place the tip between your teeth at the gum line and do little circles to massage the gums where it meets between your teeth, then bring the tip up/down between your teeth to clean the edge where your teeth meet. You should spend at least ten minutes every day with the rubber tip. This can be done anytime, anywhere, not just in the bathroom. A good time is while watching television or reading.

Flossing: Although not as easy to do with braces on, it is recommended that flossing be done on a daily basis. The floss is threaded under the wire using a floss threader then floss between two teeth as you normally would.

Soft Picks: This tool does not take the place of flossing. To use, insert between the teeth at the gum line so it will come through to the backside of your teeth.

Disclosing Tablets: Do not use the tablets for at least one week. Also do not use if you have any allergies to red dye. The disclosing tablets are used following a thorough brushing. If there is any plaque left on the teeth, these areas will be pink after using the tablets. After brushing your teeth, suck on a tablet to soften it and swish it around your teeth for about a minute. Rinse your mouth with water, getting rid of the excess dye. If you have brushed your teeth properly, only your lips, gums and tongue will be pink (will wear off by morning). If you have not brushed your teeth properly, there will be pink areas on your teeth. You will then need to brush your teeth until the pink comes off.

Gums may bleed, but don't stop brushing or using any of the other home care tools as this is an indication your gums are not healthy. Once the gums are healthy the bleeding will stop. Your gums may become puffy and swollen. It could be a natural reaction to the moving of the teeth, which will disappear when the braces are removed. The more likely cause, is that the gums have become infected due to poor home care. Daily home care with your toothbrush, proxabrush, rubber tip stimulator and dental floss will prevent bacteria build-up and infection.

4. **Sores In Mouth:** Another problem you may have is the development of little sores in your mouth. Every time you talk or eat, your cheeks rub up against the brackets and may cause a sore spot. Your cheeks have to toughen-up, but until then, you can cover the brackets with wax. This wax will come off when you eat or brush your teeth, but is not harmful to swallow. Use the wax during the day when you are talking and eating, but remove it at bedtime so your cheeks have a chance to toughen-up. Teejel or Orajel will numb the sore spot for approximately twenty to thirty minutes, giving temporary relief. Teejel and Orajel may be purchased at a pharmacy and should be applied as directed. Salt water rinses used numerous times during the day also helps with healing. Add 1 teaspoon of salt to one glass of warm water.

Another cause of a sore spot is if the wire shifts and protrudes out at the back. If this occurs, call the office and explain that you need a wire trimmed and an appointment will be arranged in the next few days. In the meantime you can place a piece of wax on top of the wire to hold it down. You may also want to continue with the salt water rinses for a few days after having the wire trimmed.

Also the wire may pull out of the back bracket and poke you at the back of the mouth. Most often this occurs on the side you chew on, because pressure has been put on the wire, this will not occur when you go into heavier wires. You can slip the wire under the hook of the bracket and put some wax on it, if your appointment is not for a while, you can call and arrange to come in to have it put back in or snipped off.

5. Please call the office **IMMEDIATELY** if you notice that a bracket is loose or wiggly. We can then allow more time at your next appointment or arrange to have you come in a few weeks earlier to repair the bracket. **PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE EVEN IF YOUR APPOINTMENT IS ON THE SAME DAY OR THE NEXT DAY.** You do not need to come in immediately if a bracket is off unless it is causing you discomfort or it is on a front tooth. A bracket which is loose for a few days will not necessarily delay treatment (unless it is just before the appointment to have your braces removed). Failure to notify the office prior to your appointment may require that the bracket be replaced at a subsequent appointment.

6. **Stains On Teeth:** Teeth will stain more easily from tea, coffee, smoking and certain foods. The stain can be removed by your Family Dentist or hygienist, however, some minor stain may remain around the brackets. If so, the stain will come off when the braces are removed. Also for the first day or two after your braces have been placed, your teeth may turn a chalky white color. This is normal and the shine will return in three to four days.
7. **Continue with your regular Dental Check-ups and cleanings with your Family Dentist:** When plaque is on the teeth and not removed for prolonged periods of time, bright white marks develop on the teeth which are whiter than your own enamel. This is the early breakdown of the tooth enamel as decay begins. These marks will remain on your teeth even after the braces are removed. Also plaque left around the gums might cause swelling and irritation and bleeding.
8. **Supplies:** If at any time you need supplies, toothbrushes, wax, rubber tip stimulators, proxabrush, floss threaders, disclosing tablets or elastics, please feel free to ask at your appointments or drop by the office.
9. **Post treatment Retention:** At the completion of treatment you will be provided with fine stainless steel wires cemented behind your top and bottom front six teeth. You will also be given a removable acrylic retainer which you will wear only at night time. If you would like a sports mouth guard made please request this at the appointment that your braces are being removed. If you want to wear a mouth guard while you have your braces on it is recommended that you wear the "one fits all" that can be purchased at a sports shop.

A charge will be applied for replacement of lost removable retainers and repairs of the bonded lingual wires.

Upon arriving at the office for your appointment, please check in at the front desk, even if the staff see you when you enter the office.

Thank you