BANKHEAD & FIRTH
ORTHODONTICS

Orthodontic Home Care Instructions

Now that you have started orthodontic treatment, here are some helpful hints and instructions to have success with braces.

Oral Hygiene:
Decalcification (white spots) and decay (cavities) can develop from a lack of proper oral hygiene. Detailed oral hygiene instructions are listed on the back side of this handout, but it is up to you to keep your teeth clean. Red, puffy or bleeding gum tissue indicates a lack of proper brushing. A brushing grade will be given at every visit. If there are areas that are missed or need improvement your assistant or doctor will go over it with you and a parent. We want you to have beautiful and healthy teeth to accompany your new smile.

Appliance Care/Forbidden Foods:
Broken brackets or bands prolong treatment time and require additional visits to the office for repairs, so take care of your braces. The easiest way to avoid broken appliances is by exercising caution with the foods you eat. A list of forbidden foods is also provided, so please follow the instructions carefully.

You should check your braces daily for loose bands and broken brackets. Please contact our office during normal business hours if you have a broken bracket to schedule a time for repair, even if you have an upcoming appointment already scheduled. Broken brackets can slow down your tooth movement and make it take longer to finish treatment.

Discomfort:
After getting braces or coming in for an appointment, your teeth will be sore for a few days. If you play sports, the soreness you will feel in your teeth will feel kind of like a sore muscle. Advil, Tylenol, or whatever you would take for a headache, will be best to alleviate this soreness. Just follow the directions on the bottle. Cold foods like yogurt or ice cream can also help. While extremely rare, if you notice any rashes or irritation on any part of your body, please call us as this could indicate an allergic reaction.

Emergency Visits:
If at any time you feel discomfort from a wire or appliance poking your cheek, place wax over the area. If that does not resolve it, call our office. If we are out of the office and you are in pain, please call our emergency phone line listed on our voicemail. A doctor or an assistant will walk you through how to fix it. If truly needed, we will meet you at the office to make you comfortable. While broken brackets are not an emergency, they do need to be fixed in a timely manner.

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Brushing:
Now that you have braces, brushing will be a little bit different because you will need to brush the brackets and your teeth 3 times a day. You must angle your toothbrush properly to get between the braces and the gum tissue as well underneath the wires. To clean next to the side of the braces, you can use the proxy (Christmas tree) brush. If you have an automatic toothbrush just angle the bristles the same way you would with a regular toothbrush, but let the brush do the work. If you have an appliance, make sure that you clean it like it's part of your teeth.

Flossing:
Flossing is just as important as brushing because it takes care of your gums, keeping them healthy and firm. Flossing a minimum of 1 time a day will clean your teeth in areas your toothbrush bristles can't reach. So, the only way to achieve a completely clean mouth is to floss daily. You can use tools like floss threaders, Superfloss, or a Waterpik to make your flossing routine with braces a little easier.

Wax:
You may get a few sores on the inside of your cheeks throughout treatment. If you do, it's okay; this is something that we expect to happen until your mouth gets used to the braces. If a bracket is bothering you or if you have a pokey wire, roll the wax into a pea-sized ball and push it over the wire or brace. Doing this will create a protective barrier that will help your sore heal. You can also rinse with warm salt water to help with the healing process.

Dental Check-ups:
You still need to see your dentist every 6 months for cleanings and exams during orthodontic treatment to check for cavities and gum disease.

Athletics:
If you play sports, it's important to wear a mouthguard to protect your teeth, lips, and cheeks from getting injured. Any mouthguard that you will wear can work and if you need help fitting the mouthguard, please let us know. If there is an accident involving your face, check if teeth are loose or appliances are broken and let us know immediately if so.

Appointments:
We will need to schedule appointments at intervals typically 6 to 8 weeks out. Always stop at the front desk after every visit to make a new appointment to get a time reserved for you.

Congratulations on starting your orthodontic journey! We are excited to have you as a patient in our office.

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