



## Braces Care

### What to Expect:

- Soreness over the first few days: Do not be surprised if your teeth or cheeks are sore for the next 5-7 days. Eating soft foods and taking Tylenol or Advil will help minimize your discomfort. Use wax as needed to cover any brackets causing tenderness of your cheeks or lips.
  - Recommended comfort products:
    - Tylenol or Advil if you are able to take either
    - Wax (provided in your start kit): dry your tooth or bracket to help it adhere better to your bracket
    - Mack's Pillow Soft Silicone Ear Plugs: these can be a great alternative to orthodontic wax if you are having trouble getting the wax to stay in place. You can pinch off a small piece and place it just like you would orthodontic wax.
    - Orajel: if you develop an aphthous ulcer or "canker sore", you can spot treat with Orajel. These typically resolve spontaneously in 7-10 days.
    - Warm saltwater rinse: ½ to 1 teaspoon of table salt per 12 ounces of warm water
- Adjustment appointments: It is critical to the progress and success of your treatment that you be seen at regular intervals. Please make sure to keep your adjustment appointments. This is the only way we are able to finish your orthodontic treatment in a timely manner. Missed appointments can prolong your treatment and could result in additional charges and poorer results.

Keeping Your Mouth Healthy: Brushing is the most important part of your oral hygiene routine during orthodontic treatment. Make sure you are brushing around all sides of each bracket, along your gumline, and your gums. Angle the bristles of the toothbrush between and around the braces to get any food or plaque off the teeth.

- Recommended hygiene products:
  - Electric Toothbrush: Electric toothbrushes help clean around brackets more efficiently and tend to be gentler while brushing gum tissue. A soft-bristled toothbrush head is recommended.
  - Fluoride-containing toothpaste: helps prevent the development of white spot lesions or "scarring" and decay
  - ACT Fluoride Mouth Rinse: Use this every night at bedtime to help prevent cavities and white spot scarring around brackets. After brushing your teeth, swish with a couple ounces of ACT for one minute and spit out. Do not swish or rinse with water, and do not eat or drink anything for 30 minutes after use. This allows the ACT to be most effective.
  - Floss:
    - Platypus Orthodontic Flossers (available on Amazon): These are the easiest way to floss with braces on.
    - Coco Floss Threaders (available for purchase in office): A great alternative to floss pick as the floss has a threader built in. This works very well for patients that need slightly thicker floss to adequately clean between teeth.
    - Traditional floss threaders: These have a loop through which you thread regular floss like you would thread a needle. Place the threader under the wire and floss as usual. Repeat steps to floss between all teeth.
  - Proxy Brushes: These fit between the tooth and wire and can help clear out larger pieces of trapped food. Great for on the go or quick clean up.
  - Waterpik: This is an awesome tool to use first during your hygiene routine. It helps flush out trapped food and plaque from between teeth, around the wire, and around each bracket. Dr. Hill likes the Waterpik Cordless, but any model will be effective at helping clean around brackets.



#### Caring for Your Braces:

- **Broken Brackets:** If you find that you have a loose band or bracket, please call to schedule an appointment to have it repaired. This is not an emergency, and can wait until the next business day. Even if you have an adjustment appointment scheduled, we will still need to hear from you to ensure we have adequate time to repair any breakages. If your band or bracket is out of your mouth, please bring it with you.
- **Poky Wires:** Sometimes a wire will work itself out of place and irritate the cheek. You can use a pencil eraser or Q-tip to push the wire against the teeth to avoid irritation or your tweezers to place the wire back in a molar bracket's tube. If the wire cannot be moved into a comfortable position, you can place wax in the area or use a small pair of clean wire or nail clippers. Call the office during the next business day to schedule a comfort visit if you are unable to get the wire into place.
- **Ligatures or O-Ties:** These are the thin metal or colored elastic ties that help hold your wires in place against your brackets. Occasionally they come off the bracket or come loose. If a ligature comes off, you can use tweezers to replace it. If a ligature is sticking out and causing discomfort of the lip or cheek, you may use a Q-tip or pencil eraser to bend it back down. Call the office during the next business day to schedule a comfort visit.
- **Ask our team about the custom Braces Comfort Kits we offer that have the instruments needed for simple comfort care at home.**
- **Sports and Braces:** Mouthguards are recommended for sports. These can either be custom-fitted (recommended after completion of orthodontic treatment as the teeth are no longer moving), or flexible which is appropriate for use during active orthodontic treatment. Shock Doctor Orthodontic Mouthguard for Braces is one example (available on Amazon).
- **Foods to Avoid:** Stay away from hard, sticky, crunchy, and chewy foods. For a more detailed list of specific foods please refer to the Foods List.
- **Dental Check-ups:** Regular visits to your dentist are important to the overall health of your teeth. As an orthodontic office we do not clean teeth nor do we check for cavities. Please continue to see your dentist for regular six-month check-ups during your orthodontic treatment.

**Vacations:** If something is causing you pain while you are out of town you can contact an orthodontist in that city and they will usually be happy to help get you comfortable. If you have one of our Braces Comfort Kits, we highly recommend you take it on vacation with you!

**Dental Check-ups:** Regular visits to your dentist are important to the overall health of your teeth. Please continue to see your dentist for regular six-month check-ups and cleanings during your orthodontic treatment. We sometimes recommend more frequent dental cleanings, and will discuss this with you as needed.

**Emergency Procedure for Nights & Weekends:** If you have been injured after hours and you cannot manage the issue at home as recommended above, please call our office comfort line at 503.659.5000 and follow the prompts to reach the appropriate voicemail box. You will be instructed to leave a detailed message, we will be notified and return your call as soon as possible. If there is a true emergency, please call 911.