

BEGINNING TREATMENT CHECKLIST

Now that you have started orthodontic treatment, here are a few hints to help you get through the first several days with minimal discomfort.

❖ **General Soreness**

- Tooth soreness can be relieved by chewing sugarless gum immediately after braces are placed. Also, anything cold, such as ice water or ice cream can relieve the tension off the wires. If the tenderness is severe, take what you normally take for headache pain.

❖ **Loose Wires, Bands, or Brackets**

- If a wire comes loose, don't be alarmed. This happens occasionally. If the wire protrudes or is irritating, use a blunt instrument (back of spoon or the eraser end of a pencil) and carefully bend the wire. Simply get it out of the way, but do not attempt to remove the arch wire. If irritation to the lips of mouth continues, place wax or a piece of wet cotton on the wire to reduce the annoyance.
- Call our office as soon as possible for an appointment to check or repair any issues with your braces. If any piece comes off, save it and bring it with you to the office.

❖ **Emergency Appointments**

- As a general rule, an emergency appointment should only be made when there is severe pain, or something is sticking out that can't be taken care of. Otherwise, wait until office hours to call and schedule an emergency appointment.

❖ **Hygiene**

- It is extremely important to brush and remove all food each time something is eaten. A travel toothbrush should always be available. Use it even if water and toothbrush are unavailable.
- Leftover food is your enemy. It causes the gums to become inflamed, infected, sore and uncomfortable. In that condition, they will bleed easily. If food is left on teeth for a period of time the food turns in to acid and eats the enamel off the teeth causing white scars that are permanent and will never go away.
- Poor hygiene can inhibit the progress of treatment and if not properly addressed can stop treatment promptly with the removal of braces before treatment is completed.

❖ **Appliance Care**

- Broken and/or loose braces: In order for the teeth to move, they must first become mobile. Once they are in the mobile stage, loose bonds and broken wires should not occur. If they do occur, re-evaluate the food eaten.
- Use common sense on the type of food to avoid. For example, raw carrots, ice, hard candies, etc. will definitely break braces loose.
- Time spent rebonding loose braces prolongs the estimated treatment time.

❖ **Arch wires & Sequence of Adjustments**

- Wires through brackets act as force mechanisms and guide the teeth movement. Therefore, intervals vary depending on the need required to maintain progressive movement.
- Typically, appointment intervals are every four weeks.



NO-NO FOOD LIST

Examples of things not to eat or chew on as they will cause damage to your brackets and wires:

****ICE****

BEEF JERKY

POPCORN

RAW CARROTS

HARD CANDY

STICKY CANDY

STARBURSTS

SKITTLES

TAFFY

HARD CHIPS

NUTS

PENS AND PENCILS

*STICKY GUM (with sugar)

***Sugar free gum is encouraged as it has several helpful factors:**

Helps alleviate soreness

Helps teeth move faster

Cleans teeth

Always use common sense when biting and chewing. **Sometimes it's not what you eat but how you eat it.** Remember that every broken bracket adds extra time to your treatment!

If you have to ask, you probably shouldn't be eating it!!



HYGIENE

Braces are food traps!!

Keeping your teeth clean is your biggest challenge because to do so means brushing after every time you eat something. To do that means carrying a travel toothbrush and using it frequently. Toothpicks, proxy brushes, etc. are also effective and can be used when a brush is not available.

What have you gained if after treatment the straight teeth have permanent enamel damage from poor hygiene? This can happen so quickly and easily that too much emphasis on the importance of good hygiene is impossible. You alone have to make the commitment to keep them clean and healthy. As much as your parents or I might want to do it for you, we can't. This may be your first major personal responsibility, don't fail!