

Orthodontic Advice



Fixed Braces

Congratulations! You have just had your brackets cemented onto your teeth. You will probably experience some difficulty over the next few days; the most common problem is brackets rubbing on the inside of the mouth.

Here are some tips;

- ❖ For the first two days eat soft food, as the brace is still delicate. This way you will chew less and the rubbing will be reduced. It may still feel a little tender for the first week after they are placed/adjusted
- ❖ You may find it necessary to take painkillers – take the tablets you would usually take for pain relief. These should only be taken for a short time if you really need them, and you must follow the instructions on the packet
- ❖ Sore spots can be dealt with by using soft wax, which will be given to you. To use the wax, break a small amount off, roll it into a small ball to soften it and press directly onto the bracket on your tooth, pushing it snugly around the corners to cover any sharp edges. This wax can be left in position even during eating and is harmless if swallowed
- ❖ Mouthwashes can be helpful – Difflam (this contains a topical anaesthetic). Peroxyl (toughens the mouth); Gengigel, Igloo and Bonjela are soothing to any ulcers

Removable Appliances (Braces or Retainers)

- ❖ Wear exactly as instructed – any period you go without wearing your brace would cause your teeth to move and the appliance will no longer fit
- ❖ Brush removable appliances with a soft brush daily – use toothpaste for removable braces but not for clear plastic retainers as it will scratch the surface. Denture cleaner, fairy liquid or soap can be used instead
- ❖ Dissolving tablets or solutions can be used and there is a variety of options available – denture cleaner (e.g. Steradent), Retainer Brite, Milton Solution, chlorhexadine mouthrinse etc. These can be used with sonic appliance cleaners e.g. SonicBrite (they usually cost around £10.00)
- ❖ If you are having extractions during treatment, please put your brace back in immediately after any teeth have been removed. Clean very carefully around the teeth and brace.
- ❖ If you have difficulty wearing your brace (e.g. loose baby teeth, discomfort) try wearing it as much as you can and call the department for advice. It can be adjusted and made comfortable at an extra appointment. If you can't wear it part time, you may need a new one. (Note: There may be a charge for the replacement)

Eating and Drinking

Once your mouth becomes more comfortable, you can return to a normal diet with a few tweaks;

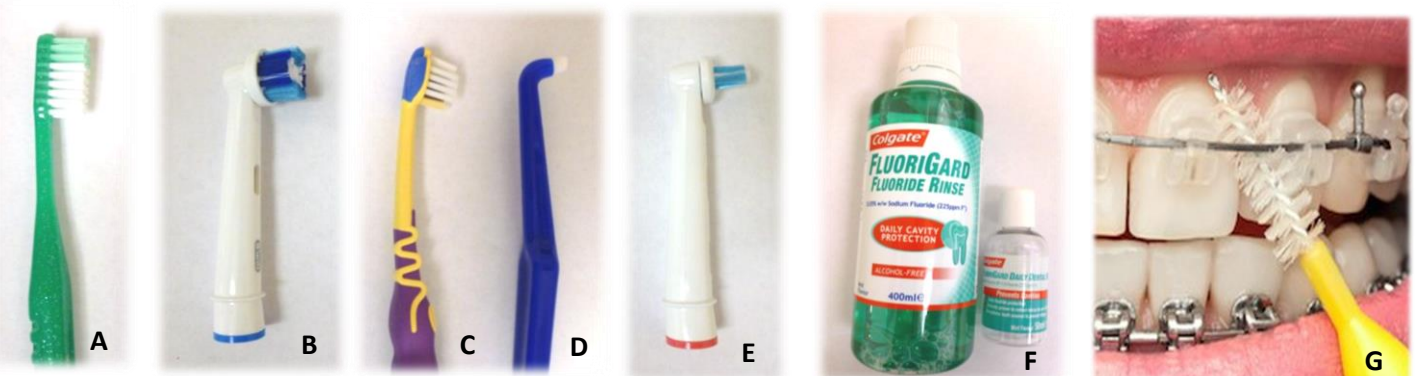
- ❖ Try to avoid eating sticky and hard food e.g. crusty baguettes, toffees, chewing gum and hard sweets as these may cause damage to the wires or even remove the little square brackets
- ❖ If eating something hard, e.g. apple's, carrots, nuts etc. you must take time to cut food up first and take mouthfuls straight to the back of the mouth where the brace is strongest and therefore less prone to breaking
- ❖ Chewing pens or fingernails can also cause breakages and problems
- ❖ Drink water, especially between meals and at night. Cut out fizzy drinks, cordial and fresh fruit juice. Even low sugar drinks (aka 'diet' soft drinks or flavoured water) are acidic and can be damaging to your teeth which may affect your treatment. Milk or tea/coffee without sugar is OK for the teeth

Cleaning Tips

It is important to keep your fixed (train-track) braces as clean as possible. Failure to do this can result in gum problems and marks being left on the teeth after treatment;



- ❖ A small toothbrush (A) or electric brush (B) is recommended for main brushing. Brushing should involve a circular motion carefully around each bracket and tooth at the correct angle, over the top and underneath the wire. Clean each tooth by itself. Cleaning will take longer, so allow extra time. At least twice a day is recommended, but in particular, teeth should be thoroughly cleaned at night before going to bed
- ❖ Additional brushes such as soft baby brushes (C) or thin interspace brushes (D) may help. You can even get attachments for electric brushes (E) that are thin enough to clean around braces
- ❖ Your dentist might advise that you rinse with a fluoride mouthwash (F) after you brush your teeth to rinse away debris. A mouthwash can also be used after eating during the day – a travel size might be helpful when on the go (e.g. at school). You might also like to take a travel brush to clean your teeth while at school
- ❖ Interdental 'bottle' brushes (G) can get underneath fixed braces and between teeth easily where food and plaque may be getting trapped
- ❖ Do not eat or drink anything after cleaning in the evening, except water. Spit out the toothpaste after brushing and do not rinse; this allows the toothpaste to soak in



Hobbies

Sportsguards

- ❖ It is a good idea to wear a mouthguard over fixed braces to protect teeth and braces whilst playing sports
- ❖ Removable appliances can be taken out to avoid damage in contact sports, allowing you to wear a normal mouthguard. Please advise your orthodontist if you practice sports a lot as leaving your appliance out frequently may affect overall treatment time
- ❖ Sports shops will sell the 'off the shelf' variety – some are much better than others
- ❖ The gold standard is a custom made mouthguard – ask your dentist about these. Please note there will be a charge to make one, and you may need further guards depending on if your bite changes significantly due to the orthodontic treatment

Woodwind/brass instrument players

- ❖ Removable appliances can often be taken out whilst playing but please advise your orthodontist on how many hours you typically practice for as it may affect overall treatment time if you take the brace out a lot
- ❖ For those with fixed braces, there are variations of lip protectors that you can buy to wear whilst playing wind instruments if you find it uncomfortable with your brace. The clear, protective covers cushion between the lips, cheek and metal brace for increased comfort
- ❖ While braces will temporarily affect your playing, with motivation and practice, players will adapt in time

Orthodontic Emergency

During Clinic Hours

If your brace breaks or causes you severe discomfort between appointments, please phone the Children's Dental Service (707427). We will be happy to give you advice or, if necessary, arrange an extra, unscheduled visit.

This service is available during working hours: Monday to Friday 8.00am - 12.00pm and 1.15pm - 4.15pm (excluding Bank Holiday)

Outside of Clinic Hours

If you have a problem outside of our normal working hours, you may be able to get help through your own dentist or through the emergency dental service, but there will be a charge for this call-out. Please note that problems with an orthodontic brace are generally not considered dental emergencies and you may not be able to access out-of-hours treatment.

Any charges made by the dentist would be your own responsibility and cannot be met by the Children's Dental Services.

REMEMBER: PREVENT PROBLEMS WHERE YOU CAN. Your brace is fairly strong but needs to be treated with care! There will be times when your brace is uncomfortable, especially in the first week and sometimes a few days after adjustments. Sometimes the wires and brackets will irritate your gums and cheeks. Generally, this can be relieved by using the soft orthodontic wax but if the pain persists you should contact the department.

Visit www.bos.org.uk (British Orthodontic Society) for more advice