

# True Dental Care

## for kids & teens

### Braces Home Care Instructions

#### Eating with Braces

What can you eat? Let's talk about what you shouldn't eat! If you've been wanting to drop a few pounds, the first week wearing braces is just your chance! For the first day or so, stick to soft foods. Avoid tough meats, hard breads, and raw vegetables. Before long, you'll be able to bite a cucumber again. But you'll need to protect your orthodontic appliances when you eat for as long as you're wearing braces.

#### Foods to Avoid

- Ice (even if you're careful)
- Jolly Ranchers, Snickers and other hard candies
- Gum of any kind
- Hard chips like Doritos
- Carrots, apples, pears, etc. should be cut into small pieces
- Stay away from the bottom of the popcorn bag - the hard kernels are bad news
- Meat should not be chewed off the bone - it should be cut off
- Corn of the cob should be sliced off
- Pizza crust, bagels, and French bread should be broken into bite-sized pieces
- Pens, pencils, and fingernails should not be bit down on as they will also damage the braces

#### General Soreness

When you get your braces on, you may feel general soreness in your mouth and teeth may be tender to biting pressures for three to five days. Rinsing your mouth with cold water can relieve this soreness, as the wires we place are thermal activated. If the tenderness is severe, take a painkiller that you would normally take for a headache or similar pain. The lips, cheeks and tongue may also become irritated for one to two weeks as they toughen and become accustomed to the surface of the braces. You can put wax on the braces to lessen this. We'll show you how!

#### Loosening of Teeth

This is to be expected throughout treatment. Don't worry! It's normal. Teeth must loosen first so they can be moved. The teeth will again become rigidly fixed in their new - corrected - positions.

## Athletics

If you play sports, it's important that you consult us for special precautions. A protective mouthguard is advised for playing contact sports. In case of any accident involving the face, check your mouth and the appliances immediately. If teeth are loosened or the appliances damaged, phone at once for an appointment. In the meantime, treat your discomfort as you would treat any general soreness.

## Brushing/Flossing

### Brushing

It's more important than ever to brush and floss regularly when you have braces, so the teeth and gums are healthy after orthodontic treatment. Patients who do not keep their teeth clean may require more frequent visits to the dentist for a professional cleaning. Adults who have a history of gum disease should also see a periodontist during orthodontic treatment.

Caring for your braces is pretty easy if you follow a few guidelines:

The first thing to consider when cleaning your teeth is that there are three surfaces of each tooth that need to be brushed.

### The outside

When brushing the outside of your teeth you should try to make a 45 degree angle toward the gum line between the head of your toothbrush and the tooth itself.

It is especially important to make sure the area between the brace and the gum stays clean.

Try to brush three teeth at a time. Make sure these teeth are completely free of food and plaque before moving to the next few. Once you're done with the outsides of the top and bottom teeth you can move to the insides.

### The inside

When brushing the inside surfaces of your teeth, try to maintain the 45 degree angle towards the gum line as you did with the outside surfaces. Again, try to brush three teeth at a time and make sure that they are clean before moving on.

### The Chewing Side

Cleaning the chewing sides of the teeth should be straightforward. Remember to brush three teeth at a time prior to moving on top the next ones.

## Flossing

Flossing with braces takes a few minutes to master, but the effort is well worth it.

There are 3 ways to floss:

- ❖ using a floss called Superfloss.
- ❖ using regular floss with floss threaders.
- ❖ using waterpik on a regular basis

They can be found in the dental aisle of most supermarkets and drug stores.

The first step to flossing is getting the floss under the wire that connects the braces together.

Once the floss is under the arch wire, it can be wrapped around the tooth to one side. The floss is then pushed up toward the gum line and then pulled down toward the wire. This should be repeated four to five times to ensure all plaque is removed. Be careful not to put too much pressure on the wire as you pull down. Then wrap the floss around the neighboring tooth. Once both teeth are done, the floss is pulled out and the process repeated for the next two teeth.

If using a Waterpik first use orthodontic pick and clean around each bracket individually then switch to the gingival plastic pick and follow your gum line first from the buccal and wrap around in back then go around gumline from lingual as well. Note: you will not be able to look in the mirror while doing this, it will be by feel. Setting no more than 2 or low. (Recommended Waterpik's are ULTA, AQUARUIS, or PLANTINUM)

#### What Do I Do if I Have an Emergency?

As a general rule, an emergency appointment may be made when there is severe pain, a loose band, a broken wire or something sticking out that you can't take care of. It's important to know the names of the parts of your appliances. It will help, when you phone the office, to be able to identify what part is broken or out of place.

If you have an emergency such as a broken bracket, loose or poking wire, or anything else that is causing you discomfort, please call the office. If we are not in the office, you can reach us by the numbers listed on the answering system. We care about our patients and their comfort during treatment with us. We will always try to correct any problem you might have as quickly as possible.

#### Care of Appliances

To successfully complete the treatment plan, the patient must work together with the treating doctor. The teeth and jaws can only move toward their corrected positions if the patient consistently wears the rubber bands, headgear or other appliances as prescribed. Damaged appliances lengthen the treatment time.

QUESTIONS?

Call True Dental Care at 201-565-0880