



Welcome to the Wonderful World of Braces!

The material used to attach the braces to your teeth cures rapidly on the surface, but it takes 24 hours to completely cure. You can eat any time after leaving our office. However, we ask that you are careful and not eat foods that will be harmful to your braces. Until you become accustomed to eating with your new braces, you may find it beneficial to follow a diet consisting of soft foods.

Initial Discomfort

Initially, braces feel like they “stick-out”. This is normal. As you become accustomed to your braces and tooth alignment improves, this sensation will disappear and will cease to be a concern. Although the brackets have been rounded and smoothed, until the cheek tissues have “toughened,” you may find it helpful to use a small piece of wax around the bracket that is creating the irritation. If your supply of wax runs out, call our office for more.

You will probably notice some discomfort beginning a few hours after your braces are placed. Some teeth, usually the front teeth, may be “tender” and sensitive to pressure. Occasionally, patients report that they experience no discomfort... but most have some soreness beginning during the first eight hours and disappearing within the week. Exactly when the discomfort ceases is impossible to predict and differs for each patient. You may wish to take non-prescription pain medication for the discomfort. For maximum effectiveness, it may be best to take it before the discomfort begins.

General Soreness

When you get your braces on, you may feel general soreness in your mouth and your teeth may be tender to biting pressures for three to five days. This can be relieved by rinsing your mouth with a warm salt water mouthwash. Dissolve one teaspoonful of salt in 8 ounces of warm water and rinse your mouth vigorously. If the tenderness is severe, take Tylenol, ibuprofen, or whatever you normally take for headache or similar pain. Your 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!

Loose Teeth

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

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Loose Wire or Band

Don't be alarmed if a wire or band comes loose. This happens occasionally. If wire protrudes and is irritating, use a blunt instrument (back of spoon or the eraser end of a pencil) and carefully, gently push the irritating wire under the archwire. Simply get it out of the way. If irritation to the lips or mouth continues, place wax or wet cotton on the wire to reduce the annoyance. Call our office as soon as possible for an appointment to check and repair the appliances. If any piece comes off, save it and bring it with you to the office.

Care of Appliances

To successfully complete the treatment plan, you must work together with our orthodontist. Teeth and jaws can only move toward their corrected positions if you consistently wear your rubber bands, headgear, or other appliances as prescribed. Damaged appliances lengthen treatment time.

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. Kids and adults who have a history of gum disease should also see a periodontist during orthodontic treatment.

Before leaving the office

- Using your finger and tongue, check that wire ends do not extend into areas which might poke your tongue or cheek.
- Make sure you understand what you are to do until your next appointment. This could include wearing headgear or elastics as instructed, adjusting an expander, or following specific hygiene or diet instruction.
- Make sure you have an adequate supply of dental wax, special cleaning aids, elastic bands or other related materials you may need between appointments.
- If you are involved in any extracurricular activities such as football, soccer or any sport that requires a mouth guard, please use one that does not fit tight against the teeth. It may prevent tooth movement.
- Always schedule your next appointment before leaving the office. Waiting 1 to 2 weeks after an appointment before scheduling your next office visit complicates the scheduling process since appointments are programmed 4 to 8 weeks in advance. Postponing appointments is a common contributor to extended treatment time.
- Make sure that your questions about treatment are answered. Treatment goes better when everyone understands the treatment process.

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