

Instructions for Braces

Welcome to the wonderful world of braces!!! Listed below are some guidelines for the maintenance and care of your appliances. Remember, if you play by the rules your treatment will be more pleasant and more successful.

If you ever have any problems, questions, or concerns about your treatment please feel free to contact us (703-815-0127). In the event of an emergency, a doctor will be on call at all times. Otherwise, your visits will be every 4-6 weeks.

Your braces come in two forms-bands and brackets. Bands are metal rings that go around the teeth and are cemented on the teeth. They are found mostly on back teeth, however, in the event that a patient is not taking good care of his/her brackets, bands may be placed on the front teeth as well. Brackets are little rectangular shaped metal appliances that are glued onto the teeth with a special dental adhesive. They are found on the teeth in the front of the mouth. After the initial placement of the braces you may experience some discomfort. Any patient experiencing a significant amount of discomfort should take the recommended dosage of Tylenol, Advil or your usual over the counter medication as needed (take whatever you usually take for a headache. Please remember that children under 12 years of age should not take aspirin).

Broken Appliances:

Occasionally braces will come off due to normal wear and tear, however, the repeated breakage of appliances creates a big problem in orthodontic therapy. Multiple broken appliances lead to prolonged treatment time, a compromised result, and additional fees. If a bracket has come loose from the tooth it will stay attached to the wire. This is not dangerous. You may leave it until your next visit. When a bracket or band has come loose please let the office know when you arrive for your next appointment. Once Dr. Filippone has evaluated the broken appliances it may be necessary to schedule an additional appointment to repair the damage. Appointments to replace broken appliances are longer than routine monthly visits and are scheduled during school hours.

Eating Habits:

Any sticky, chewy, or hard food will loosen brackets and bands. If you are unsure about a particular food please ask Dr. Filippone or a technician. There are ways to eat specific foods (steak, pizza, apples, etc.) without loosening brackets or bands. For example, cut foods in small bite size pieces and avoid biting directly into food with your front teeth. Place these foods in the back of the mouth where the bands are located.

FOODS YOU CAN EAT include, but are not limited to the following: Pies, cookies (without nuts), cake brownies, doughnuts, ice cream (without nuts), soft tacos, plain chocolate, wafers, pizza (no crust), potato chips, ho-hos, twinkies, pudding, jello.

FOODS TO AVOID include, but are not limited to the following: Chewing gum, starburst, gummy bears, now and laters, hard candies, cough drops, candy-canes, anything with nuts, anything with caramel, chewing on ice, chewing on pens, raw carrots, hard tacos, hard rolls, meat on the bone, pretzels, pizza crust, deep dish pizza, popcorn, fruit roll-up. Anything hard, chewy or sticky.

Oral Hygiene:

It takes an extra effort to keep your teeth clean with braces on them. You should be brushing your teeth 3 times a day. When brushing your teeth please pay particular attention to the areas around the braces and between the braces and gum line. We have given you a kit filled with oral hygiene aids. In addition to brushing, it is very important to clean in between your teeth with dental floss (using the floss threaders that we have provided). Your kit also contains a travel toothbrush so that you can clean your teeth during the day. Poor oral hygiene leads to permanent scarring of your teeth, prolonged treatment time, swollen gums, cavities, and periodontal (gum) problems. Occasionally, a patient's poor oral hygiene leads us to remove braces before treatment is completed. During your orthodontic treatment it is more important than ever that you see your general dentist at least twice a year for cleanings and examinations. Patients with poor oral hygiene and patients with periodontal (gum) disease will need to have cleanings more frequently.

We are a team and with your cooperation you can have a beautiful, healthy smile that will last a lifetime!!!