



ORTHO-BRACES CARE

It is important to follow these directions to minimize bracket, ligature, and wire breakage and finish the treatment in the fewest visits possible with the least damage to the teeth. Heavy biting on the brackets generates a lot of torque at the tooth surface and can sometimes cause enamel to fracture.

Foods: No candy until braces are removed. Very soft foods only for the first week—ideally liquids, if possible. Minimal meats unless very soft (meatloaf, fish). Pastas are fine. No raw apples, broccoli, or anything of similar hardness. Other foods similar to bananas, oranges, applesauce, tomatoes, lettuce are good. After that week, you need to follow the hard foods handout strictly to avoid breakage. This is not an exhaustive list and foods of a similar hardness should also be avoided. Once we place stiffer wires on the brackets they are not as likely to break, but you should ask about any foods not on the list that you eat regularly. Unfortunately, it is not always obvious when a bracket has debonded. Sometimes a patient will say that it came off in their sleep or while eating ice cream... which cannot happen. If a bracket comes off, you must stop eating any harder foods you recently ate.

Hygiene: We have given an ortho toothbrush and demonstrated use. This is usually sufficient to control plaque for most patients. Floss as much as possible. We check the gums and decay at every ortho visit and will let you know if we see any problems. If this routine is not working for your child let us know and we can try some other tools.

Pain: Aspirin, Tylenol, or Advil are usually sufficient to control any discomfort or soreness. This varies from patient to patient—some have no pain, while others are close to tears for several weeks (rarely). We have given them a supply of wax and shown them how to use it if any areas are rubbing on the tongue, lips, or cheeks. If this happens, please let us know so we can check it.

Elastics: At some point in the course of treatment we will usually give elastics (worn to help move the teeth). They are different sizes depending on what we need to do. Sometimes they will make the teeth or jaw sore for a few days after you start wearing them. You can take short breaks until the soreness subsides, but it is important to wear them as demonstrated all the time except when eating. If you do not wear them all the time, the teeth will not move and you will have the braces on much longer than discussed. Let us know if you run out of or lose the elastics so we can get you more right away.

Breakage: The brackets are bonded very tightly to the tooth, but chewing forces are very strong, and chewing harder foods will break them or the tooth or a wire, or maybe just the elastic ligature holding the wire to the bracket. If brackets break or wires become loose or bent, call the office (**or send an email or text with a photo**) and we can tell you if you need to come in sooner than your next appointment. A few broken brackets are almost unavoidable and do not cause a big problem. Continued broken brackets will extend treatment time and delay removal of your braces.