

Caring for your fixed brace

You have now begun your journey to a better smile. This information is designed to help you manage your treatment and care for your brace.

Your brace is made up of:

BRACKETS:

Brackets are the little steel or plastic “blocks” which are cemented onto the outside or inside surface of each tooth.

ARCHWIRE:

These are continuous lengths of wire which run through the individual brackets. They are secured in the bracket at the back of the mouth. These wires are responsible for tooth movement.

An informative DVD will be shown to you after your brace is fitted, which will explain cleaning techniques and gives you advice on which types of food to avoid.

Avoid any bright or richly coloured foods for THREE hours after your fixed brace is fitted, as they may stain your teeth permanently. Examples are: Tomato ketchup, some types of soup, brown sauce, mustard, baked beans, Coca-Cola/Pepsi, chocolate, coffee, strong tea etc. You can have: Water, milk, lemonade, plain pasta, white cheese, white bread, white fish, chips – basically anything which is bland in colour. **DO NOT USE YOUR MOUTH WASH/ DISCLOSING TABLETS FOR 3 DAYS** – they could permanently stain your teeth.

Think of your brace as an extension of your teeth, and that it needs to be kept just as clean as they do. Plaque forms very fast, and that combined with any food left lodged around the appliance has the potential to cause gum problems or even tooth decay. Use either an orthodontic brush or conventional brush with a small head to clean your teeth and brace. Also, use a spiral / interspace brush,

super floss and disclosing tablets as part of your cleaning routine.

Use the orthodontic brush / small conventional brush to brush everywhere as you would if you were not wearing a brace. Start at a different place each time to avoid neglect or over-brushing of particular areas. Use the spiral / interspace brush to clean between and around the brackets, bands and wires, and also any hooks or extrusions on any part of your brace.

Disclosing tablets should be used occasionally to indicate any areas you may have missed – they stain the plaque left on your teeth. The tablets work by being dissolved in a little warm water and then swished around your teeth with your tongue (spit out the excess). Don't do this on a day when you have to go out, as you will find that your lips, cheeks and tongue will stain too.

Breakages can occur if your diet is incorrect. Think about what you eat all the time. The material that is used by the orthodontist to fix the brackets to your teeth is semi-permanent – this means it can come off your teeth. We use a tweezer-like instrument to “snap” the material and the brackets off, and if you eat certain foods you will cause the same action to occur. Sometimes the way you eat can do this, i.e. if you bite into anything much harder than a sandwich with your front teeth or at the side, you could knock the brackets off in this manner. The best rule is to break or cut up everything that you eat and chew – as you are meant to naturally – with your back teeth. Don't put too much in at once; overloading can also cause breakages. Anything too hard or sticky can dislodge the bands, so don't cheat by attempting to eat a nougat bar or something similar, as this is defeating the object of sticking to a reasonably soft diet while you wear the brace.

Please note that the following are just examples of foods to avoid – if something you want to eat is not listed but similar, then treat it the same:

Toast, French bread, crusty bread/rolls, pizza crusts (cut them off and eat the soft part in the middle), raw vegetables, hard fruit, toffee, sticky sweets. Avoid nuts, hard crisps, liquorice, bubblegum/chewing gum, caramel, honeycomb, nougat, and chocolate bars containing the aforementioned things. If you love fizzy drinks, use a straw when possible – this avoids saturating your brace and teeth with the liquid which has a high sugar content (even if it says “low sugar” or “diet”).

Check your brace regularly around three times a week, and if anything has broken telephone the practice and we will see you at our next session to do a repair. A few days will not affect the function of the brace, but if left for a long period of time a loss of progress may be seen. This may result in the overall treatment time increasing. Don't panic if something happens, if you can remove anything that has come loose, do so and bring it with you to your next appointment. Use relief wax to cover anything that breaks if you cannot remove it, and replace the wax as often as is necessary.

Your brace may annoy you at first – do not worry, as this is normal. You cannot take the brace out to get

a break from it, which means that you actually get used to it much sooner than you would first imagine. If it hurts your teeth (the teeth can ache from time to time as they start to move), take a pain killer – ideally ibuprofen, as it contains an anti-inflammatory. If any areas are being rubbed and causing ulcers or sore spots, cover the offending brace area with relief wax and rinse your mouth with warm, salty water; do this as often as you can during the time in which your mouth is sore. **TIP: The relief wax sticks better to dry metal. Carefully dab at the part of the brace you wish to apply the wax to before applying it, and you will find it stays on more securely.**

You may be required to wear elastics as part of your treatment. Elastics are used in very particular circumstances and good co-operation can lead to rapid progress in your treatment.

The estimated treatment time discussed with you at the initial consultation was made with the assumption that the appointments are kept and the braces looked after, with a few to no breakages. We would greatly appreciate it if patients could maintain and tolerate their appliance as best as possible, and enter into the contract of treatment with a committed attitude.

Please contact us as soon as possible if any part of your brace is broken or loose. It is best to stop elastic wear in the case of a breakage of the brace. This will enable us to make a repair appointment if needed, or adjust your regular check appointment if it is close at hand.

Oral health advice is available from our qualified staff at all times. Our telephone number is 01245 46 3000, and our surgery hours are listed on our website www.pureorthodontics.co.uk

