



Instructions For Patients Wearing Fixed Orthodontics

You (or your parents) have made a financial commitment to improve the quality of your life and the beauty of your smile. Following The Smile Dental Team's directions and good cooperation will ensure that the treatment will progress as scheduled. This sheet offers some suggestions about what to do and what not to do during your orthodontic treatment. Please take a few minutes to sit down together and go through these suggestions.

Things to Avoid:

There are certain foods, mouth habits, etc. that we suggest you avoid while you have your braces on.

Hard Foods – (nuts, hard candy, ice, hard crusts or breads, corn on the cob, popcorn kernels, or anything that puts unnecessary pressures on the brackets or wires). If you are going to eat carrot sticks, apples, hard breads, or any type of food that you are unsure about, cut or break the foods into small pieces and be as careful as possible. When brackets are broken loose from the teeth, it requires additional time at your monthly appointments to put them back on. After a 30-day period, bracket or band replacement will incur a fee of \$20 to help cover the cost of the new appliance. We do not use "reconditioned) brackets due to distortion and hygiene concerns. It may be necessary to schedule an additional appointment for effective appliance repair or replacement.

Sticky Foods – (caramels, taffy, gum, etc.) This is particularly important if you are wearing any type of orthodontic elastics as part of your treatment.

Habits – Certain mouth habits also put unnecessary pressures on wires and brackets such as . . .chewing on pencils or pens, "playing with" brackets or wires, opening packages or cutting tags with teeth, etc. Sometimes it takes a real effort on the part of the patient and help from others (parents, spouses, etc.) to break these habits since they are usually done unconsciously.

Elastics – **Important for those patients who are prescribed orthodontic elastics** (i.e.: Rubber bands) You have been prescribed orthodontic elastics (rubber bands) and have been instructed on how to wear them. This is a very important part of your treatment and cannot be neglected. If you are unsure of the purpose of wearing the elastics, ask Dr. Johnson or a



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member of the Smile Dental Team to explain. Failure to wear elastics only extends the period of time you are asked to wear them, as well as the total treatment time.

Homecare tips – We monitor your orthodontic progress monthly, and also try to let you know when oral hygiene is not up to par, however, the responsibility of good homecare is entirely up to you. The foods you eat and how you care for your teeth and gums during treatment are of utmost importance.

Brushing immediately after eating and before bedtime are wonderful habits for anyone. While you're wearing braces, they're even more important.

Just brushing the tooth surface does not keep your mouth healthy. Make sure brushing includes gums as well as teeth. If gums are not used to proper care, they may bleed for the first few days. That's normal. If soreness or bleeding persists more than a few days, you will need to talk with Dr. Johnson or a Smile Dental Hygienist.

Use a soft or gentle toothbrush. It is kinder to gums; and if brushing is performed several times a day, as suggested, a soft brush is sufficient for removing food particles

Yes!! It is possible to floss your teeth when you have braces, and should be done regularly. We will give you instructions when you come for your appointments. Just ask us!

If you were prescribed a Sonicare toothbrush at the beginning of your treatment, use it as directed along with flossing and rinsing. The toothbrush heads should be replaced every three months. Please brush before your appointment. We understand that many times you are coming from work, school, etc. and are not able to brush. If that is the case, just let us know, and we will provide you with a toothbrush and paste so that you may brush before we look in your mouth.

If you ever have any questions about homecare, feel free to ask us. We may give you further instructions, or suggest something to make homecare easier for you.

Other suggestions – If a molar band comes off (the bands that encircle the first permanent molars), call our office. When these come off of the teeth, the wires can slip out causing discomfort.

Most often we see you one time every month for an orthodontic adjustment. We set aside a special time each month to see only our orthodontic patients. We feel like this is a good service for you because on



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this day, we do not perform lengthy procedures, therefore the time you may have to wait is minimal.

Keep your regular six-month recare appointments during your treatment. These cleanings and examinations are important to insure the general health of the teeth and gums during orthodontics. It may be done either at our office or at your general dentist, but must be kept current. At these appointments, the teeth are cleaned and examined (using x-rays) to detect if any problems are present (decay, gum problems, teeth that aren't coming in properly, etc). If the cleaning is done in our office, we try to take this opportunity to speak with parents and answer any questions that you might have. Fees for this appointment are separate from the orthodontic treatment. (If you are seeing another dentist for your recare appointments, please let us know so we are aware that you are receiving this care).

If you are involved in any sports or "rough play" in which you may be bumped in the mouth, ask us about having a custom mouthguard made. Being hit in the mouth can damage the brackets and wires as well as being very painful. These can "soften the blow".

If you have any questions about your treatment or feel like you need some extra homecare instructions, give us a call or let us know at your next appointment and we will be happy to help. You are on your way to a beautiful smile that will last a lifetime. We hope these suggestions will offer some help along the way.