

Your braces will create new challenges in keeping teeth and gums healthy. They can trap lots of food and allow harmful dental plaque to accumulate & do damage in places it normally would not have that chance. That's why it's vital for you to follow the braces care instructions from our office! **We need you to maintain a healthy smile during treatment to avoid ugly white scars, cavities, and persistent gum infection.** We can't do it for you, but we can teach you how!



Brush Your Teeth Daily & Often

Remember to *always* brush your teeth at least twice a day—after breakfast in the morning, and right before bed at night. When it's possible, it's smart to brush your teeth 30 minutes after every meal. Waiting 30 minutes allows your saliva enough time to “wash” away many of the harmful acids from food which can cause permanent white scars, cavities, and gingivitis.

Brush your teeth like this:

1. Brush the outside of each tooth, angling the bristles so they reach under the wire and around braces.
2. Brush where your gums and teeth meet using a circular scrubbing motion.
3. Brush the inside surface of each tooth on the tongue side.
4. Brush the chewing surfaces of your teeth.
5. When brushing, always push hard enough to force the bristles to SCRUB and get into all nooks & crannies.
6. Brush long enough (at least 3 minutes!) to ensure you don't miss any spots.

Floss At Least Once a Day

Plaque loves to hide between teeth where your toothbrush bristles can't reach. That's why it's important to floss once a day. A floss threader, available from us or a pharmacy, helps you get the floss started behind your braces. Certain flossers called “platypus” flossers can assist with this, too.

Floss your teeth like this:

1. Thread floss through the threader and slip it up behind your archwire.
2. Pull the floss between two teeth and up under your gum margins.
3. Rinse with clean water.

*** Alternatively, you can use the “platypus” type of flossers with a handle—but be sure they are made for braces!

Strengthen Enamel With Fluoride

Use fluoridated toothpaste as well as a fluoride mouth rinse. Fluoride will help strengthen your tooth enamel, decreasing your risk of cavities. Your water may not have fluoride in it, so be sure to do these things to give your teeth the fluoride they need!

MORE ON OTHER SIDE!

Avoid Sticky, Crunchy, & Hard-to-Chew Foods

While you're wearing braces, you can eat *almost* all your favorite foods. To learn more, check out your Bonding Card or jump online to investigate which foods are BAD IDEAS.

Please stay away from these troublemakers!

- Sticky chewy foods like taffy, caramels, and jerky
- Hard foods like raw carrots and apples, unless cooked or cut into bite-size pieces
- Crunchy foods like corn chips, popcorn, almonds, and corn nuts
- Candy and other sweets, unless in moderation
- Sugary beverages like fruit juice, sports drinks, and pop.

***** Candy, soft drinks, or other sweet drinks: 1. Make them infrequent special treats, 2. Rinse thoroughly with water afterward, and 3. Be sure to clean your teeth well as soon as you can afterward!**

Take Care of Poking Wires or Brackets

We do our best to avoid them (and so should you by following our recommendations!), but occasionally we may need to fix poking wires or loose brackets. If these occur, please **call our office right away** so we can determine whether we need to see you before your next scheduled visit! Sometimes there are things you can do at home for minor issues:

- If your wires start poking, you can try to trim the wire with clean nail clippers.
- If a bracket is irritating your cheeks, place a small ball of braces wax on the offending bracket.
- If a bracket comes loose, we will most likely replace it at your next visit, but definitely call us to find out

Maintain a Healthy Oral Hygiene Routine

1	2	3	4	5
				
Poor	Needs Improvement	Average	Good	Excellent
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permanent damage present• Floss, brush & fluoride rinse• If you receive this score twice in a row, you will be placed in our oral hygiene program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heading for permanent damage• Floss, brush & fluoride rinse• If you receive this score twice in a row, you will be placed in our oral hygiene program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work hard to improve• Floss, brush & fluoride rinse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep up the good work!• Floss, brush & fluoride rinse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great job!• You're on your way to a beautiful result!

Don't ever hesitate to call us with questions or concerns! We are here to help. 812-944-6759