

Braces Friendly Foods

While you must modify your diet during treatment, there are still many things you can enjoy.

Snacks (Be sure to brush after you enjoy these!)

- Chocolate (Twix, Reeses Cups, 100 Grand, Hershey's Kisses, 3 Musketeers)
- Ice Cream (no Rocky Road, though!) and shakes
- Cakes and pastries
- Soft cookies (finely chopped nuts are fine)
- Mini-pretzel sticks, thin chips, crackers
- Pirate's Booty (a great popcorn alternative!)

Brace Busters

A good general rule is to avoid all hard and sticky foods. Hard foods knock brackets off the teeth and bend wires and bands. Sticky foods pull wires away from the braces and may pull bands off the teeth. Some examples are:

Hard Foods: If it crunches when you bite it, it's probably too hard.

- Ice
- Raw carrots, apples (unless sliced thinly), corn on the cob
- Hard cookies, pizza and bread crusts, tough bagels, hard pretzels (pretzel rods), granola bars
- Popcorn, corn chips, nuts (including Snickers bars, Peanut M & M's), peanut brittle
- Beef jerky, ribs, Buffalo wings
- Hard candy (Jolly Ranchers, Lifesavers, mints, Skittles, lollipops)

Sticky Foods:

- Gum (not even sugar free)
- Caramel or candy apples
- Chewy candy (i.e. Milk Duds, Sugar Babies, Rolos, gummies, Swedish Fish, Twizzlers, taffy, Starburst, Air Heads, Now-n-Laters, gum drops)
- Rice Krispy treats

In addition to avoiding the above types of food there are habits that can bend and break your braces:

Habits That Will Damage Your Braces:

Chewing pens and pencils, biting your fingernails, sucking your thumb, nervous picking at your brackets and wires, picking braces with toothpicks or other sharp items.

General Soreness

When you get your braces on, you may feel general soreness in your mouth and teeth may be tender to biting pressures for three to five days. This can be relieved by taking an alternating schedule of Tylenol and Ibuprofen. The lips, cheeks and tongue may also become irritated for one to two weeks as they toughen and become accustomed to the surface of the braces. You can put wax on the braces to lessen this. Warm salt water rinsing will also help to speed your recovery. Dissolve one teaspoonful of salt in 8 ounces of warm water, and rinse your mouth vigorously – do this several times a day.

Loosening of Teeth

This is to be expected throughout treatment. Don't worry! It's normal. Teeth must loosen first so they can be moved. The teeth will again become rigidly fixed in their new – corrected – positions.

Care of Appliances

To successfully complete the treatment plan, the patient must work together with the orthodontist. The teeth and jaws can only move toward their corrected positions if the patient consistently wears the elastics, headgear or other appliances as prescribed. Repeatedly damaged appliances lengthen the treatment time. Lack of compliance with your orthodontists' requests for elastic or headgear wear can also lengthen your treatment time.

Brushing & Flossing

Braces create small wedges, nooks and crannies for food deposits, which can lead to cavities, gum problems, bad breath and areas of decalcification. This makes brushing and flossing even more important while you are wearing braces. The best way to brush is to place a soft bristle brush at a 45 degree angle against the gums. Move the brush back and forth in short strokes with a gentle scrubbing motion. Brush all surfaces of every tooth in your mouth. Don't forget to brush the inside surfaces as well. Brush for at least two minutes, three times a day. The interproximal brush (the small brush shaped like an evergreen tree), can be used to reach underneath the wire. Don't forget to brush your tongue to help freshen your breath. Inspect your teeth with a well lighted mirror to be sure you haven't left plaque deposits.



Keep your teeth and braces clean along the gum line, or they may become sore and swollen, which will make brushing more difficult.



An interproximal brush is always recommended as a hygiene aid.

An oral irrigator is a pretty cool appliance to use. It uses a jet stream of water to flush bits of food from places your toothbrush can't reach. Use a "[Waterpik](#)" to aid with brushing, never instead of brushing.

Everyone who wears braces should use dental floss daily. Flossing is your best weapon against decay causing plaque that hides in between the teeth and gums. It will help keep your gums from getting swollen. It is a little tricky while wearing braces to floss, but a floss threader can help you.



At least once a day, remove every trace of plaque and trapped food from between teeth and braces using floss.

Thread the floss through the threader and slip it up behind your arch wire. Hold the floss between two teeth and work up under the gumline. Curve the floss against the tooth and gently slide it into the space between the gum and tooth. Gently rub the side of the tooth with the floss, moving the floss away from the gum. Now curve the floss against the adjacent tooth and slide it up and down, wiping each tooth surface clean. Repeat with all your teeth. Once you are finished, rinse your mouth with warm water to wash away any loosened food or particles, then brush again.

A fluoride gel is also recommended for any patient who has fixed appliances. 'Phos Flur' is the brand we suggest. It requires a prescription, which we provide. 'Phos Flur' is best used once a day, at bed time. 'Phos Flur' will be applied after you have brushed and flossed to remove all the plaque. Apply a thin ribbon of the fluoride gel to your toothbrush and place it along your gum line; spit out the excess. This is not toothpaste, so do not brush with it. It is meant to protect your teeth by coating them with fluoride. You should not eat or drink anything for at least 30 minutes after you use it. If you use it right before bed the fluoride protects your teeth all night.

It's more important than ever to brush and floss regularly when you have braces, so the teeth and gums are healthy after orthodontic treatment. You will be expected to see your family dentist for regular three to six month checkups and routine care. Routine dental care will help ensure the best possible results from your orthodontic therapy. Patients who do not keep their teeth clean may require more frequent visits to the dentist for a professional cleaning. Adults who have a history of gum disease should also see a periodontist during orthodontic treatment.

Retainer Instructions

- Wear your retainers as the doctors instruct.
- Clean retainers thoroughly once a day with a toothbrush. Hold the retainer in the palm of your hand. Carefully brush the inside and outside surfaces. Use warm but not hot water. Brushing retainers removes the plaque, and eliminates odors. Efferdent or other orthodontic appliance cleaners can be used, but do not take the place of brushing.
- When retainers are not in your mouth they should ALWAYS be in a retainer case. Pets love to chew on them!
- Retainers are breakable, so treat them with care. If retainers are lost or broken call us to schedule an appointment for an evaluation.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your retainers, or your retainers need adjusting, call us. Do not try to adjust them yourself.
- Always bring your retainers to your appointments.
- Retainer replacement is expensive... with proper care they will last for years!
- Remove retainers when swimming.
- Keep retainers away from hot water, hot car dashboards, pockets, the washing machine, and napkins.



Athletics

If you play contact sports, an orthodontic mouthguard is advised. In case of any accident involving the face, check your mouth and the appliances immediately. If teeth are loosened or the appliances damaged, phone at once for an appointment. In the meantime, treat your discomfort as you would treat any general soreness.

Loose Wire or Band

Don't be alarmed if a wire protrudes or comes loose. This happens occasionally. If a wire protrudes and is irritating, use a blunt instrument (back of spoon, an eraser, or tweezers) and gently push the irritating wire out of the way. If the irritation to the lips or mouth continues, place wax on the wire to reduce the annoyance. Use warm salt water rinses to soothe and speed the healing.