

Helpful Tips while in Orthodontic Treatment

Eating Habits & Orthodontics:

- Avoid eating hard & sticky foods, as well as foods high in sugar content.
- Hard foods may do damage by bending wires, loosening cement under the bands or breaking the little brackets and tubes which are attached.
- Sticky foods damage appliances by bending wires and pulling cement loose.
- Foods high in sugar content should be avoided whenever possible. If you do eat any of them, brush your teeth immediately after. If it is not convenient to brush, then rinse your mouth with clear water after eating sweet foods.
- DON'T EAT- popcorn, nuts, peanut brittle, ice, lemons, corn on the cob, corn chips, crisp tacos, or pizza crust. Also stay away from hard candy, taffy, caramels, gummy bears, etc.
- NEVER chew bubble gum
- MAYBE – carrot sticks, apples (if cut into wedges, don't bite into a whole apple), hard breads (take small pieces and be very careful), and diet drinks (because they are low in sugar content).

How to brush your teeth:

- You should brush your teeth within 5 minutes after you eat. We suggest you carry a travel toothbrush when you are away or at school.
- Brush your teeth back and forth, between the wires and gums on the upper and lower teeth to loosen food particles.
- Then brush as if you had no braces –
 - Scrub in a circular motion, 2 or 3 teeth at a time using 10 strokes, then move on.
 - Brush the same way on the inner surfaces
 - Scrub the chewing surfaces last.
 - Start the process on the outside of the lower teeth and repeat this process.
 - Remember to direct the brush at 45 degree angle toward the gum area
 - Rinse your mouth and look in the mirror to see if you missed any places. If so, be sure to clean those areas.

Orthodontic Retention:

- At the completion of the active phase of your ortho treatment you begin the period we call retention.
- To retain means to hold.

- In the case of your teeth, they must be retained or held in their new position until the tissues, meaning the bone, the elastic membrane surrounding the root, the gingivae or gums, and the tongue and lips have adapted themselves to their new positions.
- If we did not make an effort to retain the teeth following orthodontic movement, they would tend to move back to their original positions.
- The length of time the teeth must be retained varies with each individual.
- Retainers are not often broken when they are in place. If you **MUST** remove your retainer, be sure to keep it in a safe place. DOGS love retainers 😊 If your retainer should become lost or broken, contact your orthodontist immediately so we can replace it as soon as possible.

What to expect from Orthodontic Treatment:

- The completion of your treatment is the result of a combination of your cooperation and our knowledge and skill.
- About 95% of the correction will be retained because of the fact that your teeth are there to be used.
- The chewing forces that are at work in your mouth cause some adaptive changes that the teeth will make to function best. This is not a failure of your correction, but a result of the natural changes that occur.
- Now that your Ortho Treatment is completed, it is extremely important that you continue to see your family dentist every 6 months for cleanings and exams.
- You also need to stay on top of your oral hygiene... It's up to you!

Orthodontic Emergencies:

- Even though you are careful, you still may occasionally do some damage to your appliance.
- If a band comes loose from a tooth, **CALL OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY.**
- **IF YOU ARE OUT OF TOWN:** Have an orthodontist or dentist cut the small wire and take off the band. Keep all parts and bring them in to our office when you are back in town.
- If a small wire breaks, carefully remove it and call our office. If you are unable to take care of a sticking wire, place some wax over the sticker. The wax is provided to you by the office. Any time you need more, just ask!
- If a main archwire breaks, call our office for an emergency appointment.
- If you are involved with a contact sport, a regular mouthguard can be fitted over your braces for added protection. Please ask the Orthodontist about sports mouthguards!