

A Guide to your Orthodontic Treatment

To achieve great results, orthodontic treatment requires a high level of patient co-operation. Below is some information that you should find useful as you start your treatment. There are three main areas of concern for looking after your braces well and thus giving you the best chance for an excellent result as soon as possible.

Oral Hygiene

It is important that you keep your teeth and braces clean. While you are wearing them you should clean your teeth with an orthodontic toothbrush after breakfast, after lunch and at night. Using a fluoride mouthwash daily, will help to maintain healthy teeth. If it is not possible to brush your teeth after lunch then a fluoride mouth rinse should be used and then your teeth brushed as soon as possible in the afternoon.

Properly cared for orthodontic appliances do not harm teeth, however poor cleaning can result in damage to your teeth and may mean that your braces will have to be removed early, leaving treatment unfinished.

Dietary Habits

Sugary snacks and drinks should be avoided between meals. Food in between meals should be savoury, with sweet treats kept until mealtimes. Drinks should be water, sugar free squash, tea (with no added sugar), or similar. Fruit juices should be limited to mealtimes. Fizzy drinks, including sugar free varieties and even fizzy water, should be limited to 2-3 glasses per week. If they are to be drunk, then they should be limited to mealtimes and drunk through a straw.

Hard and sticky foods can damage the braces and bend the worse. Breakages are a concern for two reasons:

- Breakages add time to treatment
- Continual breakages will result in a compromised treatment result and in some cases, we may have to discuss the removal of the brace

In Order to avoid breakages, avoid all hard and sticky food, such as:

- Sticky sweets, e.g., toffee, chewing gum, Haribo.
- Hard sweets, e.g., Polos, tic tac's. chuba chup lollies
- Hard foods, nuts, no nail biting or chewing pen/pencils, no opening water bottles
- No food where you have to nibble around a hard edge, such as ribs, chicken wings or corn on the cob
- If you want to eat an apple or raw carrots cut them up into small pieces and chew carefully with your back teeth

Retainers and Relapse

Active treatment is followed by retention with a passive appliance to hold the teeth in their true position. Teeth have a tendency to change their positions after orthodontic treatment and this is particularly true of the lower incisor teeth. Retention is very important to minimise the risk of any unexpected tooth movement (relapse) and we encourage you to wear your retainers as prescribed by your orthodontist.

Dental check-ups

You must continue to see your dentist on a regular basis during Orthodontic treatment and you may benefit from dental hygienist visits.