

# FIXED APPLIANCES

## WHAT IS A FIXED APPLIANCE?

Fixed braces are made up of brackets that are temporarily stuck onto each tooth. A flexible wire runs through the brackets in each arch and allows the teeth to be moved into the correct position.

Fixed attachments **should not** be removed by the patients – trying to remove them may damage the teeth and gums.

## WILL IT BE PAINFUL?

The brace may feel rough to the inside of your lips and cheeks for the first week – soft wax is provided and this can ease the initial discomfort.

The teeth are likely to be sore for the first few days due to the pressure put onto them by the brace; this is also the case after each adjustment. Painkillers, such as the ones you would normally take for a headache, will help. During treatment the teeth can become mobile and gaps may open or close this is all very normal.

## WILL I BE ABLE TO SPEAK NORMALLY?

Lisping may be a problem at first but most people soon adapt and quickly begin to speak clearly within a few days with practice.

Keeping lips well moisturised with lip salve helps.

## HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO WEAR MY BRACE?

It varies depending on how severe the case is. Fixed braces are generally required for about 12-24 months however failed and cancelled appointments or repeated breakages of the brace will add to the overall time.

## CAN I EAT NORMALLY WITH FIXED BRACES?

For the first few days it is best to keep to soft foods, to avoid damage to the brace you should avoid:

- *Sticky, chewy foods such as toffees, boiled sweets, chewing gum, chewy chocolate bars*
- *Hard foods which might damage the brace such as carrots, tough meats, hard pizza bases, crusty bread. Try cutting up food into small pieces and chewing on your back teeth*
- *Fizzy drinks (including fizzy water) and excessive amounts of fresh fruit juices – these can cause decay and dental erosion. Milk, water and dilute squash are the safest drinks*
- *Nail biting and pen chewing as this can damage the brace*
- *Avoid heavily coloured food/drink if you have aesthetic brackets i.e. curry/red wine*

## WHAT ABOUT BRUSHING MY TEETH?

The teeth, gums and braces **must** be kept completely clean. It is important that you brush your teeth thoroughly at least 3-4 times a day. Try to brush your teeth after breakfast, lunchtime, when you return home from school/work and last thing before bed. If your gums bleed it is a sign of inflammation and indicates that more thorough cleaning is needed.

If the teeth are not kept clean then permanent staining of the teeth (decalcification) can result. This is the first indication of tooth decay and the braces may be taken off before the end of treatment to minimise the damage.

# CLEANING ESSENTIALS

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

### **1. Small, soft/medium bristled toothbrush and a fluoride toothpaste.**

Pay particular attention to brush where the gums and teeth meet. Try and have an ordered sequence of brushing so you don't forget to brush the front, back and biting surfaces of the teeth - it is time consuming but essential. Good brushing includes brushing your tongue and the roof of your mouth. Make sure you change your brush every 3 months as it tends to wear down more quickly. If your braces look clean and shiny and if you can see the edges of the brackets clearly, you've done a good job!

### **2. Inter-dental brush/Flossing with a floss threader**

The inter-dental brush helps clean in between the brackets and under the wires. A floss threader is a tool that allows dental floss to get underneath the arch wires easily. You should floss at least once a day; ideally before bed.

### **3. Fluoride mouthwash**

A daily fluoride mouthwash is advisable as this can help prevent decay and decalcification (permanent marks on teeth) – FluoriGard is the mouthwash recommended as it has a high concentration of fluoride.

#### **HOW OFTEN DO I SEE MY ORTHODONTIST?**

Every 8-10 weeks for the brace to be adjusted.

#### **DO I STILL NEED TO SEE MY DENTIST?**

Yes – your dentist will need to check all other aspects of your teeth on a 6-12 monthly basis.

#### **CAN I STILL WEAR A MOUTH GUARD FOR SPORTS?**

Yes; but it will have to be a special orthodontic one to fit over the braces. Mouth guards should be worn for sports such as rugby, hockey, football, boxing etc.

We have stock & custom-made mouth guards

#### **CAN I STILL PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?**

If you play a wind instrument, particularly the flute or a brass instrument this can be difficult at first with a fixed brace, however most patients get used to it with practice.

#### **WHAT IF MY BRACE BREAKS?**

Real emergencies in orthodontics are rare – not all breakages are classified as urgent so we will try to organise an appointment as soon as we can:

Common issues:

- Bracket/wire breaks – contact us for advice  
If just prior to an orthodontic appointment and you are not in pain – wait until your appointment
- Wire digging in/rubbing – use wax or a piece of chewing gum to act as a cushion until you can see your orthodontist

**Please contact us: 07891 649268**

#### **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END WHEN MY BRACES FINALLY COME OFF?**

At the end of active treatment we need to take measures to ensure that the teeth maintain their new alignment and we achieve this with a combination of fixed and removable retainers. Fixed retainers are thin wires cemented behind the teeth, which are left in place for a number of years.

Patients will also have removable clear plastic retainers to wear on a night time basis only. The use of such retainers is gradually reduced with time.