

## Braces Information Sheet

Congratulations on the commencement of your orthodontic treatment. Now that your braces have been placed here is what you can expect. First, you will begin to feel a dull ache amongst your teeth 1-2 hours after your wires have been tied into your braces. For those that had elastic separators, the sensation will be similar although the pressure from the separators tends to be localized to the molar region. The pressure will be the worst the night of or morning after the placement of your brackets and will gradually subside over the next 2-4 days. Each patient's response to orthodontic forces is different. Many patients will be limited to soft foods (e.g. Mashed Potatoes, Smoothies, etc.) over the first several days. Patients can expect to feel a similar sensation after future orthodontic adjustments although the initial visit is usually the most difficult.

Each patient must become acclimated to their braces. Despite the low profile and small size of the braces that we use, they are still not as smooth as your natural teeth. Therefore, it is possible that the braces will irritate the lips or cheeks. If this is the case, you can apply orthodontic wax to the area. To do so, dry the area with a tissue or paper towel (otherwise the wax will not stick) and placed a ball of wax onto the irritant. This will provide a smoother surface and help to alleviate the discomfort.

Over time the lips and cheeks will become acclimated to the appliances and wax will not be necessary. But, it is possible that something may occur during treatment that causes a wire or bracket to poke. If this is the case sugarless gum can be used as a substitute for wax. Contrary to a common misconception, chewing gum is absolutely permissible as long as it is sugarless.



As patients are told after the braces are delivered, there are dietary restrictions that accompany orthodontic treatment. You must stay away from hard, sticky, and chewy foods. Hard foods, like ice or jawbreakers, may potentially break braces (cause them to no longer be bonded to the tooth). This occurs when the hard object is between a tooth and an opposing bracket while chewing. The force of biting will then dislodge the bracket (brace) from the tooth. Other hard foods that can break braces include apples, corn on the cob, and carrots. These foods can be eaten but they must be cut into pieces.



Early on in treatment broken braces usually have minimal impact. But in the finishing stages of treatment this can be a tremendous setback sometimes adding 3-4 months to treatment.

Chewy foods, like taffies or caramels, must be avoided as they can potentially dislodge orthodontic brackets and bands. They can also distort wires or pull them out of the bands and/or brackets. Finally, Dr. Humphries discourages patients from eating popcorn with braces. The reason is that the popcorn kernel can become lodged underneath the gums causing a



localized infection. Despite this

request, every year at least one patient will come into the office with their face swollen due to a kernel embedded below the gum line.

In order to obtain our treatment objectives as seamlessly as possible, it is essential that patients maintain good hygiene. Poor oral hygiene will result in gingival inflammation which reduces the rate of orthodontic tooth movement. In addition, poor oral hygiene can result in decalcification (white marks/scars) or decay (cavities) of the teeth.

Patients are encouraged to brush after every meal. This is the reason that your welcome kit includes a travel tooth brush. Should thorough brushing in the day not be feasible, we request that at minimum the teeth are brushed every morning and evening. In addition to brushing, patients should floss between their teeth at least one time per day. The most common shortcoming for patients with their brushing is that they often fail to adequately clean the area between the brace and the gum. There is a small space between the gum and the tooth and it is essential that the tooth brush bristles go underneath the gum so that any subgingival plaque can be removed.



In order to obtain our treatment objectives as seamlessly as possible, it is essential that instructions are followed precisely during orthodontic treatment. Many treatment plans require orthodontic rubber bands or elastics. They can be worn in an infinite number of configurations and are made in many different sizes and strengths. It is important that the prescription is adhered to correctly and that they are worn all of the time. Teeth move in response to continuous force and intermittent force will not produce tooth movement. Thus, in order to obtain the desired tooth movement with rubber bands, they must be worn all the time except while brushing or eating. This should equate to approximately 22 hours per day. Limited wear will not produce the desired tooth movement and this will delay the completion of treatment.

We are very excited to be a part of your orthodontic care. If at any time you have any questions or concerns with regard to your treatment please feel free to contact our office. I always encourage patients to ask questions as patient education and involvement are critical components of modern health care.



Happy straightening!!!!

Dr. Sage Humphries and Staff

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