

## THE CARE OF YOUR BRACES

Caring for your new braces involves two separate but equally important parts: 1) keeping the braces clean, and 2) preventing the braces from becoming damaged.

### 1) KEEPING THE BRACES CLEAN

Everyone with braces **must** brush four times a day; once after breakfast, lunch and supper, and once before going to sleep. You must brush even if you skip a meal, since the bacteria present on your braces will damage your teeth and gums. If you eat between meals, you should also brush at that time. You should brush using the method you learned when you received your braces, for at least 4 minutes each time. You should floss your teeth once per day, before going to sleep. Improper brushing can result in the development of gum disease, and cause permanent damage to your teeth by allowing decay to occur. At each appointment, we will assess your level of brushing, and we give you a score from 1 to 4, with 4 indicating perfect brushing. If a patient receives four consecutive scores of 2 or less, we may consider removing the braces, to avoid the possibility of permanent tooth damage.

### 2) KEEPING THE BRACES UNDAAGED

Eating the wrong foods, biting on hard objects, and mouth injuries can damage your braces. This may result in loose braces and bent wires. Damaging the braces may increase the time you wear them on your teeth. Consequently, you must avoid certain activities and foods. You must avoid chewing the end of your pen, biting your fingernails, or poking anything at your braces. If you play a contact sport, please tell us, and we will make you a mouth-guard. Many of the things you should not eat are probably the things you like most, but remember that each time you break a bracket or bend a wire, your treatment time can increase by as much as one month. **This means that you will wear your braces for an additional month, for each time one of the brackets comes loose.** You must be careful each time you eat or bite anything. These are some foods that will damage braces:

Ice (You must NEVER chew ice!!)	Toffee, Caramels	Suckers or Hard Candies
Nuts, of any kind	Toasted bagels or Bread crusts	Raw Carrots
Pizza crust (the centre is fine)	Ribs, Chicken wings	Granola, Trail mix (of any type)
Taco or Potato Chips	Dehydrated foods (fruit, beef jerky)	Gum, Licorice
Taco Shells (soft shells are okay)	Pretzels, Popcorn	
Chocolate bars	Cheezies or similar snacks	

Your friends may say, "Oh, I eat whatever I want and it's okay." These are **your** braces and you alone are responsible for them. Please remember this before you do anything that may harm your braces. Everyone can have an accident, though. If something gets bent, becomes loose, or hurts the inside of your mouth you must call the office immediately. We can decide how to deal with the problem, and possibly arrange another visit to fix the damage. It is too late to tell us about a problem when you come in for your regular appointment. We must set aside specific time to fix accidents, and we may not be able to do this during a regular visit. If you have any concerns or problems, PLEASE CALL! Even if you call when the office is closed, you may leave a message.

Please remember to brush your teeth immediately before each appointment. If you cannot brush before your appointment, bring a toothbrush so you can brush at the office. You should bring all appliances (bionators, retainers, etc.) with you to each appointment!

We are available to help you with any orthodontic concern. Our goal is to complete your orthodontic treatment quickly, and make your smile fantastic!