



Cleaning Your Braces

**YOUR DILIGENCE IN DAILY CLEANING IS REALLY
THE KEY TO GOOD ORAL HEALTH.**

BRUSHING:

With your toothbrush (soft bristles only):

When? After every meal. If you cannot brush right away, rinse well with water.

FLOSSING:

When? Nightly after brushing

How? Use a floss threader between gums and braces.

Why? It removes plaque that the toothbrush misses.

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1. Use a dry brush with a small amount of toothpaste. Place bristles where gums and teeth meet.



2. Use circular, vibrating motions around the gum lines. 10 seconds on each tooth.



3. Brush slowly, each tooth arch separately, on every tooth.



4. Brush the lower teeth up and the upper teeth down. Brush your tongue and the roof of your mouth too.



CONCENTRATE ON THE DANGER ZONE!

...the space between the bands or brackets and the gums



5. Carefully pull unwaxed floss between wire and braces. A floss threader may be helpful.



6. Floss carefully around the braces.



7. Floss carefully around the gum area.



8. Floss carefully around each tooth.



9. Try a [proxy brush](#) to clean between the teeth.

10. Waterpik™ *oral irrigator* will remove particles of food from your teeth that brushing often cannot remove.

11. Use a *fluoride mouth rinse* to strengthen enamel against decay and repair microscopic cavities by remineralizing them.

12. See the dentist every six months for professional fluoride treatments and cleanings.

13. Electric toothbrushes provide "superior plaque removal ... reduction of gingival inflammation in those patients using the powered versus the manual toothbrush".



What to Do If a Bracket or Wire Breaks

Broken braces, loose bands or protruding wires can cause problems that rarely require emergency treatment. However, do call your orthodontist to set up an office visit to fix the problem. If you suffer a more severe mouth or facial injury, seek immediate help. *Here are some tips to get you through some of the more common problems until you are able to see your orthodontist.*

Loose brackets Apply a small piece of orthodontic wax to temporarily reattach loose brackets or place a wax over the bracket to provide cushion between the bracket and your gums and over soft tissues of your mouth. Your orthodontist usually provides orthodontic wax to you when you first get your braces.

Loose bands These will need to be replaced or recemented into place. Save the band and schedule an appointment for the repair.

Protruding or broken wire Use an eraser end of a pencil to move the wire to a less bothersome position. If you cannot move it out of the way, apply a small amount of orthodontic wax over the protruding end. Do not attempt to cut the wire because you might accidentally swallow it or inhale it into your lungs. If a mouth sore develops from the wire poking inside of your mouth, rinse your mouth with warm salt water or an antiseptic rinse. An over-the-counter dental anesthetic can also be supplied to numb the area.

Loose spacers These will need to be repositioned or replaced if they slip or fall out completely.

Length of Time Retainers Should be Worn.

Since the purpose of retainers is to prevent your teeth from shifting back into their original position, they should be worn at least until your jawbone and gums have had time to stabilize around your newly aligned teeth. Many orthodontists recommend that children and teenagers wear their retainers until early or mid-20s – until all the permanent teeth have come in and the jaw stops growing.

Other Problems

Because braces brush up against the surface of your mouth, you may be more prone to developing canker sores. If a canker sore develops, your orthodontist or dentist may prescribe a corticosteroid ointment or a prescription or nonprescription pain-reliever solution to reduce the pain and irritation and help heal the sore.



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