



Oral Hygiene and Information Sheet for Orthodontic Patients

With orthodontic appliances in your mouth you are at a higher risk for dental decay and gingivitis. Dental decay is a disease that results in the destruction of your teeth. It will range from white spots to cavities. Clean teeth and braces provide the best protection against damage to your teeth!

Three factors must overlap before decay can be prevented. They are:

- a) Effective Plaque Control,
- b) Fluoride strengthening, and
- c) Attention to diet

Recommendations

The following measures have all been clinically proven to help prevent decay and/or gingivitis. They will shift the balance in your favor so that you are less prone to decay.

Please fully adhere to the following:

1) Practice daily home care (effective plaque control)

Brushing

Orthodontic brushes are designed to clean both the tooth and the orthodontic bracket. Use a short back and forth motion to cleanse both surfaces. Also brush gumline and biting surfaces. **Do not rush this - allow three to five minutes to do a good thorough job.** Gums that bleed need more brushing.

Patients should brush their teeth immediately after each meal and at least 3 times per day. Most of the damage done to the teeth occurs within the first half-hour after eating. If you are unable to brush at school, brush after having a snack when you get home from school.

You can use a **Power-assisted toothbrush**- such as the **Braun Oral-B® 3D Excel**.

Cleaning between teeth Proxi-brush

Use an interdental brush to clean between the teeth and archwire or where there are larger spaces between teeth. Select the proper size brush to fit the space.

Flossing

Thread a 45cm piece of floss through a floss threader. Insert the threader between the teeth and under the archwire. Slide floss up and down against the tooth surface and under the gumline. Floss each tooth thoroughly with a clean section of floss.

Irrigation

Waterpiks or similar devices can be very helpful to sweep food debris away after a meal. However they are not to be used instead of good brushing and flossing.

2) Strengthening your teeth with fluoride

- Use a fluoride toothpaste
- Drink optimally fluoridated water
- Get a Fluoride treatment at your dental visits

Rinse with Fluorinse once a day - Fluorinse daily fluoride mouthwash has a .05% strength and is blue with an ice mint flavor. Follow the directions on the bottle carefully before using. Both the weekly and daily are available OTC (over the counter) at most drug stores.

Rinse with Peridex® once daily for two weeks – This is a .012% chlorhexidine solution. Do this every 4 to 6 months. This is the only mouthwash effective against the bacteria that causes decay and gingivitis. Please read the label carefully before using.

3) Minimize dietary sugar:

- Minimize sweets over prolonged periods of the day. It is not the quantity but the frequency of sugar intake that causes decay. Sugar with meals is okay. Avoid sugar between meals.
- Beware of the sugar content in certain snack foods - e.g. chips, cookies, ice cream, fruit juices - look at the labeling.
- Watch the sugars in tea, coffee, sodas
- You may use sugar substitutes (sugar free sweeteners)

Chew Xylitol sweetened chewing gum- Some examples are: **Trident Advantage®, Arm and Hammer Dental Care Gum®, and Colgate Dental Gum.** Chew after every meal for about 20 minutes.

4) Please keep regular dental checkups as well as your orthodontic checks:

- Your cleanings and appropriate x-rays
- Early detection and removal of decay
- The professional fluoride treatments

What to Expect During Orthodontic Treatment

Adjustment Appointments:

The treatment is carried out by a system of adjustments to the wires, which is typically once every 3-4 weeks in our office for the duration of treatment.

Retainers:

When braces are first removed, your gums, bones, etc., will not have completely shifted into their new positions. The retainer holds your teeth in position until your gums, bones, etc., settle in to their new positions. You need to wear your retainer 24 hours a day for at least 6 months after your braces are removed. Then continue to wear the retainer nightly.

Precautions to Take with Braces

Sports:

You can still participate in sports. Just wear a mouth guard, and try to not get hit in the mouth. We recommend that you avoid sports where you will get hit in the face. Fighting, boxing, wrestling, and karate can be very painful if you get hurt when you have braces.

Eating:

You can eat most of the good things that you can eat now. The one big limitation is that your mouth will get sore after you first get braces, and after your adjustment appointments, so we recommend that you only eat softer foods for a few days after these appointments.

Foods to Avoid:

You should not eat very hard or sticky foods. You also need to be careful with crunchy foods like carrots and apples so that you do not knock your braces off your teeth. **Also, gum is usually not recommended as it can get caught on braces and pull braces off and distort wires, and the sugar in the gum can cause cavities. You can chew Xylitol sweetened gum (refer to above list).**

NOTE: If your braces come off, the dentist will attach them again. If it happens lots of times, your orthodontic treatment will take longer and cost you more.

This is so important that if you are not sure about any of the above, and have any questions, please call our office.