

The Most Important Parts of Our Usual Appliance

Brackets

Recently, methods and materials have been perfected that allow braces to be cemented or bonded directly to the tooth surface. In some cases it is no longer necessary to cement a band around each tooth in order to hold the “handles” or brackets in place. Once treatment is finished the brackets are removed and the tooth surface polished free of the cementing materials.

Bands

These are thin bands of metal carefully fitted to the tooth and then cemented in place. They carry brackets, tubes, or rotating levers, (in other words, they become a handle on your tooth). They give us a way to grasp and control each individual tooth.

Arch wires

These act as a guide or track along which the teeth are to be moved. They are changed throughout the treatment. Each change brings us closer to the ideal tooth position.

Headgear

Sometimes called a neck strap (or cervical retractor). This uses an elastic force outside the mouth itself that helps to bring the upper teeth back.

Rubber bands

These provide a force, which helps teeth move, usually employing one arch or group of teeth against the other.

Brackets on bands

Bonded bracket

Little rings or modules

Headgear tube

Tie back wire

Bent end of archwire

Hook for rubberband

Elastic (rubber band)

Tie wires

When and How Should You Clean Your Teeth During Orthodontic Treatment?

WHEN

Within 5 minutes after you eat. Easy to say but sometimes hard to do? When you are away from home we suggest you carry a travel type or folding toothbrush with you.

HOW

First, brush back and forth across...between the wires and gums on the upper and lower to loosen the food particles.

Next, brush correctly as if you had no bands on.

Start on the outside of the uppers with bristles at a 45-degree angle toward the gum or shelf we have referred to. Scrub with a circular motion two or three at a time using 10 strokes and move on.

Do the same on the inner surfaces of the uppers.

Scrub the chewing surfaces last.

Start on the outside of the lower teeth and repeat this process. Remember to direct the brush at an angle toward the gum or shelf area.

Rinse your mouth and toothbrush. Look in a mirror to see if you have missed any places. Check the little half moon spaces of tooth between the molar tubes and gums. If you see any areas you have missed, clean them now.

When you have finished, the bands and wires should be free of all food particles and the soft white coating (called plaque). The bands should look clean and shiny.

The oral lavage or oral hygiene device (water type) can be very helpful but it is to be used AFTER thorough brushing. It is not a substitute for brushing but does remove food particles that the brush cannot reach.

Eating Habits and Orthodontics

Foods that are appealing but dangerous:

Sweets

Bubble Gum

Caramel

A careful orthodontic patient can probably eat almost any food and do no damage to his or her appliance. However, these three types of food may cause trouble as may other foods. Use common sense or if you are in doubt, ask us about some food you enjoy eating.

Avoid eating:

Hard Foods may do damage by bending wires, loosening cement under the bands or breaking the little brackets and tubes which are attached.

Sticky foods damage appliances by bending wires and pulling cement loose.

Foods high in sugar content avoid whenever possible. If you do eat any of them, brush your teeth immediately. If not convenient to brush, then always rinse your mouth with clear water after eating very sweet foods such as cake or pie.

Don't eat:

Popcorn, nuts, peanut brittle

Ice (not even if you are careful)

Lemons (pure lemon juice can hurt your tooth enamel)

Corn-on-the-cob

Corn chips, crisp tacos

Taffy

Caramels

Bubble gum, or any type of gum – a thousand times NO!

Carbonated sodas

Maybe:

Carrot sticks (if you cut into carrot curls which are thin)

Apples (cut into wedges; don't bite)

Hard French bread (if you take small pieces and are very careful)