

BRUSHING / FLOSSING

PROPER HYGIENE

The best way to ensure a clean and healthy smile is brushing and flossing. Food particles can accumulate on teeth and in braces, and over time, turn into plaque. The bacteria that results from this accumulation can lead to gum disease, tooth decay and even loss of teeth. To avoid these problems while you are in orthodontic treatment, take special care of your braces, teeth and gums to ensure you will have the best possible result.

BRUSHING

Use a toothbrush with soft bristles and a small strip of fluoride toothpaste. When you brush your teeth, move the brush in small, circular motions to reach food particles that may be under your gum line. Hold the toothbrush at an angle and brush slowly and carefully, covering all areas between teeth, between braces and the surface of each tooth. It will take you several minutes to thoroughly brush your teeth.

1. Brush around the gum in a circular motion going over every tooth.
2. Brush over the brackets and over every tooth.

Brush up on the lower teeth, down on the upper teeth and the outside, inside and chewing surface of your front and back teeth. Brush your tongue and the roof of your mouth before you rinse.

Especially during orthodontic treatment, brush your teeth at least two times daily to avoid the accumulation of food particles in your teeth and braces.

- * Right after school
- * At bedtime

You will need to replace your toothbrush more often due to your appliances. As soon as the bristles start to wear down or fray, replace your toothbrush with a new one. It may be difficult for your toothbrush to reach some areas under your archwire. Do not swallow any toothpaste; rinse your mouth thoroughly with water after you finish brushing. It is important to floss and use an antibacterial mouthwash and fluoride treatment throughout your orthodontic treatment and beyond for optimal oral hygiene.

We recommend that you spend most of your brushing and flossing time right after school which may take you up to 5 minutes. At bedtime brush for two minutes and rinse with the a fluoride rinse for one minute before sleeping. Please follow the instructions on how to use the fluoride rinse. Please do not eat or drink anything

after using the fluoride rinse for at least half an hour.

FLOSSING

For areas between the teeth that a toothbrush can't reach, use dental floss to remove food particles and plaque. Flossing takes more time and patience when you are wearing braces, but it is important to floss your teeth every day.

Use the reusable floss threader provided by our office to floss under your archwire daily. Pull a small length of floss from the dispenser through the threader and slide it up and down along the front of each tooth. You will be able to feel when the tooth is clean and hear the squeak of the floss against your clean teeth. Use care around your archwire and do not floss too forcefully around it or put too much pressure on it. After you floss between your archwire and braces, floss between your other teeth and gums.

If you are flossing without the floss threader, pull a small length of floss from the dispenser. Wrap the ends of the floss tightly around your middle fingers. Guide the floss between all teeth to the gum line, pulling out food particles or plaque. Unwrap clean floss from around your fingers as you go, so that you have used the floss from beginning to end when you finish. Floss behind all of your back teeth.

When you first begin flossing around your braces, your gums may bleed a little. If the bleeding does not go away after the first few times, inform a staff member at your next appointment.

BRACES AND WIRES ARE FRAGILE AND CAN BE DAMAGED BY EATING STICKY AND HARD FOODS. IF YOU DAMAGE YOUR BRACES OR ANY PART OF YOUR APPLIANCE BECOMES LOOSE OR BROKEN BETWEEN VISITS, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

AVOID STICKY FOODS	Caramels • Caramel Apples • Sugar Daddies • Sugar Babies Cinnamon Bears • Licorice • Toffee • Tootsie Rolls • Gum
AVOID HARD FOODS	Nuts • Hard Pretzels • Ice • Popcorn • Doritos Corn on the Cob • Hard Candy • Jerky
CUT UP HARD FOODS	Apples • Steak • Carrots • Celery Pizza Crusts • Bagels
FOODS THAT ARE HIGH IN SUGAR CONTENT, MAY LEAD TO TOOTH DECAY. TO PREVENT PLAQUE BUILD UP AND TOOTH DECAY, BRUSH AFTER EVERY MEAL AND SNACK. AVOID PULLING AND PICKING ON YOUR APPLIANCES.	
REDUCE EATING	Candy • Pie • Cookies • Cake • Ice Cream
REDUCE DRINKING	Pop Sodas • Drinks with Sugar
REDUCE CHEWING	Pens • Fingernails • Pencils