

## So you've got braces – what do you do now?

**Discomfort:** The first few days can be uncomfortable, and you can take whatever pain medications you usually would for a headache – Tylenol, Advil, etc. It will take awhile for your cheeks to become used to the braces, and until then we recommend using the soft wax that we provide to cover up any braces that cause sore spots.

**Eating:** For the first few days, you will probably want to eat soft foods because your teeth will be sore. Pasta, soups, mashed potatoes, bananas, etc. After the initial discomfort is over, it is important to avoid hard or sticky foods. Stay away from things like gum, taffy, caramel, Starburst, Skittles, very hard pretzels, Doritos, nuts, and refrain from chewing ice. Use common sense, and don't eat anything that is hard or sticky. Don't bite into apples, carrots, or other crunchy veggies with your front teeth – you can cut them into very thin slices with a knife and chew them with your back teeth. It is very important that you avoid drinking soda and other juices and sports drinks when you have braces on, the sugar can do major damage to permanently discolor your teeth. Also, be careful using utensils when you eat, if they hit your braces there could be sparks. (Just kidding, nothing will happen!)

**Brushing:** Please see the enclosed Brushing Instructions for a detailed description of a very effective brushing technique. You should brush at least 3 times daily – once after breakfast, once after lunch, and once before bed. Products containing an extra amount of fluoride are also recommended [Prevident 5000 toothpaste (available by prescription only) and ACT mouthwash (available at any drug store)] The following schedule is recommended:

After breakfast – brush with Colgate Total, rinse with ACT mouthwash

After lunch – brush with Colgate Total

After dinner – brush with Colgate Total using, floss between all teeth

Before bed – Rinse with Inspector Hector mouthwash to see where to brush, then brush your teeth clean, then rinse with ACT mouthwash. Do not rinse your mouth out with water after you finish brushing.

Following this schedule will reduce your likelihood of developing cavities, gum disease or white spots on your teeth.

**Problems:** If a wire comes loose or a bracket pops off, please call our office to reschedule your appointment. If something is loose and is hurting you, we will get you into the office as soon as we can. If nothing is hurting, we will try to schedule you around the same time as your original appointment, but we will need a little additional time to fix the problem. If you are seriously injured, please go ahead to the emergency room. Please call us if you have any doubt.

**Sports/musical instruments:** Always wear a mouth guard when you play sports. Ask us for recommendations. Musical instruments can be played without a problem, although they will feel a little different if you use your mouth to play them.