

# Taking Care of Your Appliance



Now that you have your appliance, it is important to take good care of it! Successful orthodontic treatment involves the work of the doctor and the staff and, most importantly, your cooperation.

## Brushing

Food that collects around your appliance can cause permanent stains, cavities, and unpleasant odors. Extra care must be taken in areas between the gums and your appliance. Brush after each meal using a fluoride toothpaste. A Water-Pik is also recommended for the hard-to-reach areas.

## What to Expect

The first few days are an adjustment, as your mouth is not yet accustomed to having your appliance. Here are a few common things you may experience:

- **Excess saliva** — your brain is registering this new object as food and is creating more saliva in your mouth.
- **Difficulty swallowing** — in time, your tongue will find a comfortable place to swallow.
- **Space between front teeth** — if your appliance is a palatal expander, over time you will develop a space between your front teeth. Don't panic! This is a good sign that the appliance is making the expansion we're looking to achieve. After expansion is complete, those teeth will come back together.

## Avoid Eating

- **Hard Foods:** Hard foods may damage your appliance and loosen cement under the bands. Examples include: nuts, ice, hard pizza crust, popcorn, hard chips, etc.
- **Sticky Foods:** Sticky foods may weaken the bond of the cement holding your appliance in. Examples include: Skittles, Starburst, Sour Patch Kids, gummy bears, caramel, gum, etc.
- **Foods High in Sugar:** Sugary foods—especially drinks—increase your chance of “white spots” on the enamel of your teeth. This is decalcification, which makes teeth more susceptible to cavities. Examples include: Gatorade, Vitamin Water, sweetened iced tea, lemonade, fruit juice, soda, etc.

Fruits and vegetables such as raw apples and carrots should be cut into small pieces and eaten carefully. Hard crusty bread should be broken into small pieces. Please exercise caution in your selection of foods. As a general rule, keep pens, pencils, fingers, etc. out of your mouth.

## If You Experience Soreness

After your appliance is inserted, you may experience soreness of the soft tissues—gums, cheeks, or tongue. This is normal and usually disappears within a few days. To ease discomfort:

- Swish with warm salt water
- Place wax over rough areas
- Take Tylenol, Advil, or Aspirin every 4 hours while there is discomfort

Do not take these for more than three days in a row.

## What To Do in Case of an Emergency

There are very few true orthodontic emergencies. If something is bothering you:

- First, visit our website: [www.dutchessortho.com](http://www.dutchessortho.com). *Instructions for most emergencies are on the “Patient Information” page.*
- If you cannot solve the issue, call the office: (845) 896-8880

Even if the issue is resolved, always schedule an appointment to check if repairs are needed.

