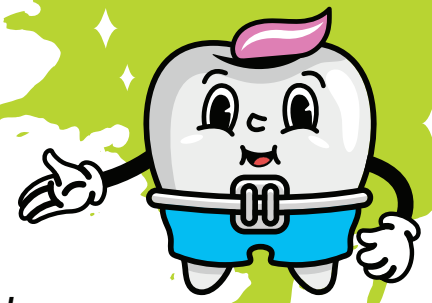


# Taking Care of Your Braces



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

## Brushing

Food that collects around your braces and wires can cause permanent stains, cavities, and unpleasant odors. Extra care must be taken in the areas between the gums and appliances.

Brush after each meal using a toothpaste containing fluoride, as well as flossing. A Water Pik is highly recommended.

No matter what kind of toothbrush you are using, each time you brush should last 2–4 minutes. The better you do at keeping your teeth and gums clean, the nicer your smile will look the day we take the braces off!

## Avoid Eating

- **Hard Foods:** Hard foods may do damage by bending wires and loosening cement under bands and brackets. Examples include: nuts, ice, hard pizza crust, lollipops, popcorn, chips, hard taco shells, etc.
- **Sticky Foods:** Sticky foods damage appliances by bending wires and pulling brackets and bands loose. Examples include: Skittles, Starburst, taffy, gummy bears, gum, caramel, chewy candy bars, 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.

**Please exercise caution in your selection of food. As a general rule, keep pens, pencils, fingers, etc. out of your mouth.**

## If You Experience Soreness

After your braces are applied, you may experience soreness of the soft tissues—the gums, cheeks, or tongue. This is normal and should disappear in a few days.

### To ease discomfort:

- Swish with a warm salt water solution
- Take Tylenol, Advil, or Aspirin every four hours while there is discomfort (do not take for more than 3 days in a row)
- Place wax over any rough or sharp areas
- Swish with cold water (no ice) or eat cold foods like ice cream or smoothies

## SPORTS GUARDS

If you play sports, it's recommended you wear a sports guard made for braces to protect your teeth, cheeks, lips, and gums.

**Recommended brands: Shock Doctor, Under Armour, Battle Guard. These can be purchased on Amazon or at sporting goods stores.**

**Do NOT boil and bite—wear as is.**

## What To Do in Case of an Emergency

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

- Visit our website first: [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**  
*If the office is closed, you will receive an emergency contact number.*
- Even if the issue is resolved, ALWAYS schedule an appointment so we can make any necessary repairs.

## Remember... YOUR COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL!

**Repeated missed appointments and frequent breakage will incur additional costs, extend treatment time, and compromise the final result.**

