

Molen Orthodontics Manual

Everything you need to know about your
Orthodontic treatment and much more!





Table of Contents

When will I get my Braces Off?.....	3
How to be a Happy Patient	5
Appointment Scheduling.....	6
First Days in Braces.....	10
Things You Should Expect to Happen.....	12
Bite “Turbos”	14
Eating with Braces and Appliances.....	15
Loose Braces.....	18
Oral Hygiene with Orthodontics	20
The Oral Hygiene Grading System.....	22
Oral Hygiene Instruction.....	23
“Molen Moolah” Rewards Program.....	28
Decalcification.....	29
How Do Teeth Move?.....	30
The Parts of Your Braces.....	30
Damon System Braces and Titanium “Space Age” Wires.....	33
Elastic (Rubber Band)Wear.....	34
Retention.....	35
Wisdom Teeth.....	37
Problems & “Emergencies”.....	38
After Hours “Emergencies”	40
Avoiding Problems and Convenient Solutions.....	41
“Easy on Teeth” Recipes.....	44

When will I get my braces off?

When will I get my braces off? You will probably begin asking that question on your very next visit!

As orthodontists, we can make a good “guesstimate” at the beginning of your treatment. However, no orthodontist can precisely predict exactly how long treatment will take. We can base our prediction on the large number of patients we see who are similar to you, but the fact is you are not average. You are unique and have a unique set of genes, background, personality and goals. This is why everyone at our office loves what they do. Our work is always interesting and always fun.



Unfortunately, we cannot give you an exact date of when your braces will be removed. The good news is that we usually finish treatment a little ahead of or right on schedule for most of our patients. Only small percent of patients complete treatment behind schedule. We will do our very best to assist you so that you will be in the first group.

This manual has been designed to provide you with as much information as possible about our practice and policies, and to help answer your questions regarding your orthodontic treatment. It also helps explain procedures that may be used in your treatment and how to properly care for your teeth and braces. We will answer common questions that our patients have asked in the past, but we realize that you may have other questions during the course of your treatment. Please do not hesitate to ask them. By adding to your knowledge of orthodontics, you can help us do a better job of straightening your teeth and be an active participant in the success of your treatment.



You have selected an Orthodontist because our dental specialty and advanced training involves the correction of tooth and jaw alignment problems. It may be a problem of appearance, a lack of function, or concern for your future dental health. Now that you have asked us for help, your problem has become our problem too. Together we will work to achieve the goals for correcting your specific orthodontic problems and give you a “Molen Magic” smile!

- It is important to understand that great care of your teeth is necessary during treatment. You must keep your braces and teeth EXTRA CLEAN by having excellent and consistent brushing habits.
- Continue to see your family dentist every 6 months for your regular cleaning and check up appointments. ***THIS IS CRITICAL***
- If you follow instructions, your treatment should finish on schedule. If you don't follow our instructions, nothing will go on schedule. You can even make it impossible for us to correct your problem.

Welcome to the world of Orthodontics! We'll do our best to make it a rewarding and pleasant experience for **you!**



How to be a Happy Patient

We are always happy to see you. Your interest and cooperation makes our job fun!



1st Keep your appointments as they are scheduled. If you find a conflict with a scheduled appointment, please call to change it as soon as possible.

2nd Follow all instructions. Brush and floss as we show you, wear your appliances and elastics as instructed, and always avoid the harmful foods. If you have a removable appliance, always bring it with you to your scheduled appointment.

3rd If you have problems with missed appointments, broken braces or broken appliances, you will soon find that your teeth are not moving as scheduled and that your treatment will invariably take longer than we originally planned.



Appointment Scheduling

Patients are seen on an appointment basis only. Appointments are generally scheduled 8-12 weeks apart. Our procedures vary in length from a few minutes to two hours. In order to perform the finest orthodontics possible, appointments will be scheduled to be mutually beneficial to both you and our office.

Although we take into account work and school schedules, it will be necessary to schedule you during these periods at various times. We will make every attempt to keep these appointments to a minimum, but please understand that **all** children in our practice go to school and most of our adult patients work.

An appointment in our office is regarded as a contract of time reserved for your treatment. We respect our patients' valuable time and will make every effort to keep any waiting to a minimum. Arriving late for an appointment leaves only three options for our office:

1. Reschedule your appointment
2. Do less than we had planned for your visit that day
3. Perform your entire treatment and be late for every other patient that follows you

Clearly, none of these options are ideal, so please be on time. In our office, we employ a "10 minutes late" policy, where if you arrive more than 10 minutes late for your appointment, we will need to reschedule you. This helps us stay on time for all of our patients during the day. If you find it impossible to keep an appointment, please notify us at least 48 hours in advance so that we may schedule another patient in your place.



Missed or Cancelled Appointments: may mean that you must wait several weeks for a new appointment, even if it is a “short” visit. Continued missed appointments can only lead to longer treatment time and possibly increased fees. Additionally, since before and after school and work appointments are scheduled far in advance because of their popularity, missed appointments may need to be scheduled during the middle of the day. These same guidelines apply for appointments that are canceled on short notice.

“Long” Appointments: (procedure is scheduled for 40 minutes or longer) or multiple appointments that are scheduled in sequence can cause for long delays if canceled or missed. It is not uncommon to have to wait an additional 8-10 weeks to be rescheduled for these appointments. These appointments take up large blocks of time during the day which are booked far in advance. Please do everything possible to keep your scheduled appointments and help keep your treatment progressing on schedule.

Like Things at Like Times: We schedule appointments in a precise manner. The same types of appointments are scheduled at the same time. This enables the office to run more efficiently and allows us to achieve a better quality of treatment, and in the end, better serve you, our patient.

“Special” Appointments or Comfort Adjustments: We allocate a specific time during each day to see special appointments (i.e. loose bands, loose brackets, eliminating wire pokes, etc). This time is set aside so it does not interfere with previously scheduled appointments. Please understand that seeing you for this special appointment does not mean we will fix the entire problem. The purpose of the special appointment is to make you comfortable.



While most of our patients would prefer to be seen between 3:00 and 4:30 PM, we hope that you will understand that appointments must be divided between mornings and afternoons throughout your treatment.



We schedule longer appointments during school and work hours and short appointments before and after school or work. This is done for the convenience of all patients. If we did not schedule in this manner, the entire afternoon would be reserved for only one or two patients.

Most orthodontic offices that are not “on time” find themselves in this position because they spend thirty to forty percent of their workday repairing braces. Unexpected special appointments lengthen treatment time and inconveniences other patients.

Over the years we have treated many staff members. Thus, we have found that it is an extremely rare occasion that braces come loose or wires break. Therefore, we know that most loose brackets are caused by lack of attention to instructions given by our office. We also know that this breakage is not done purposely or maliciously.

So that we can stay on time and so that your treatment will not be prolonged, we ask the following of you:

- Keep your appointment slip where you will see it often.
- Leave early enough to get to your appointment even if traffic is slower than normal.
- Follow instructions given by our office to avoid broken appliances.
- If you have a broken appliance or loose bracket, call us so that we can schedule an appointment for you with adequate time for repair. It may only be necessary to add time to your next appointment.





Office Hours:

Sumner Office: Monday-Friday 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM
(Lunch from 12:00 – 1:00 pm)

Enumclaw and Auburn Office: We work and see patients in these offices on specific days of the month and for the convenience of our patients, these days vary from week to week. When we are seeing patients in these offices, the hours are from 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM with lunch from 12:00 – 1:00pm. On days that we are not seeing patients in Enumclaw or Auburn, these offices are not staffed and are closed. Our Sumner office is always staffed and open Monday – Friday (excluding holidays). If you have a question or are having a problem with your braces or appliance, please call the office. If you call the Enumclaw or Auburn office on a day it is closed, your call will automatically be forwarded to the Sumner office where a team member will be able to assist you.

Automated Appointment Reminder System

We have an automated appointment reminder system that is run nightly via a computer program. A few days before you have a scheduled appointment, you will receive an automated email or text reminding you of your appointment. This service is provided as a courtesy, but should not be relied upon as your only means for remembering your appointment. The system does not work if you don't have your email address or cell phone number in our system. It is ultimately your responsibility to remember and come to your scheduled appointments. Remember, missed appointments will slow down your treatment progress and extend your treatment time!



First Days in Braces

We use state-of-the-art, high tech adhesive, wires and braces. Within 24 hours of leaving our office after your initial appointment, the brackets and adhesives are at 100% of their final strength. However, we do ask that you be careful about the foods you eat that could cause your braces to become loose or broken. Until you become accustomed to eating with your new braces, you may find it beneficial to follow a diet consisting of soft foods. Remember, broken or loose braces slow down treatment progress!

Will My Braces Hurt?

Initially the braces feel like they “stick out”. This is normal. As you become accustomed to your braces and tooth alignment improves, this sensation will disappear. Although the brackets are rounded and fairly smooth, you may find it helpful to use a small piece of wax around the bracket that is creating irritation until the cheek tissues have “toughened”. If your supply of wax runs out, you may stop by the office to pick up more or we can refill your wax at your next appointment. Wax can also be purchased at your local drug store.

You will probably notice some discomfort beginning 4-6 hours after your braces are placed. Some teeth (usually the front teeth) may be tender and sensitive to pressure making it difficult to chew or put your teeth together. This soreness dissipates within the week. Exactly when the discomfort ceases is impossible to predict and differs for each patient. You may wish to take Advil or Tylenol or whatever you would normally take for a headache. For maximum effectiveness, it may be best to take such medications before the discomfort begins. Also, rinsing with warm salt water can help relieve the soreness of your teeth and gums.



Before Leaving the Office:

There are routine steps that we ask you to complete prior to leaving the office. These steps will minimize discomfort and ensure your treatment continues to progress. **Please make these steps a part of each visit:**

- Using your finger and tongue, check to be sure the wire ends do not extend into areas that might poke or abrade your cheek or tongue.
- Make sure you understand what you are to do until your next appointment. This could include wearing an appliance or elastics, adjusting an expander or following specific hygiene or diet instructions.
- Make sure you have an adequate supply of wax, special cleaning aids, elastic (rubber) bands, or other related materials you may need between appointments.
- Always schedule your next appointment before leaving the office. Waiting 1-2 weeks after an appointment before scheduling your next visit complicates the scheduling process. Appointments are programmed 8-12 weeks in advance. Dr. Molen will determine the interval between appointment, depending on your stage of treatment.
- Make sure that your questions about treatment are answered. We will achieve our beautiful results much faster and more smoothly when all of our efforts are synchronized!



Things you should expect to Happen

Expect your wires to eventually stick out behind your back teeth early in treatment. This happens because when your teeth are really crooked at the beginning of treatment and your teeth align, the wire has to flatten out and go somewhere, which is out the back of your braces. Don't worry. This just means your braces are working! Use a pair of nail clippers or cuticle cutters and clip the wire behind the last bracket that it is protruding from. If you are unable to clip it yourself, call our office for a comfort adjustment appointment and we will clip the wire for you.

- Expect your teeth and gums to initially get sore. This is normal and indicates that your teeth are starting to move and that your cheeks and gums are getting used to the braces. Advil or Tylenol (or whatever you normally take for a headache) and warm salt water rinses help. It may also be necessary to stick to a diet consisting of soft foods during your first week in braces.
- Expect spaces to open up between your teeth where they did not exist before. As teeth move to their new position, spaces commonly open up between the teeth. This is a natural occurrence, so don't worry. The spaces will be consolidated, and then completely closed, during specific stages of your treatment.
- Expect your teeth to become loose while they are being moved. Loosening of the teeth is common throughout treatment. This is normal and should not upset you. The teeth will again become rigidly fixed following removal of the appliances. Teeth must loosen first so they can move to their new positions.



- Expect your mouth to produce a lot of saliva because your brain thinks the braces are food in your mouth. Your brain will quickly adjust to the braces and the amount of saliva you produce will return to normal.
- Expect to have some difficulty with speaking for the first few days. In most cases, you will get used to your braces quickly and can speak easily after about a week. Initially, reading out loud will help you talk clearly in a very short period of time.
- If you had bite turbos placed and one of them comes off of your front teeth, don't worry about it! We place two bite turbos so you always have a back up! If both of them come off, call us so we can schedule an appointment to replace it. If you have turbos on your BACK teeth and one comes off, call us so we can get it replaced. You always need to have two turbos on your BACK teeth (one on each side).
- If one of the brackets comes off a tooth near the back of your mouth that the wire is not running through, don't worry about it. It won't slow your treatment down.

USE THE FOLLOWING TO RELIEVE DISCOMFORT

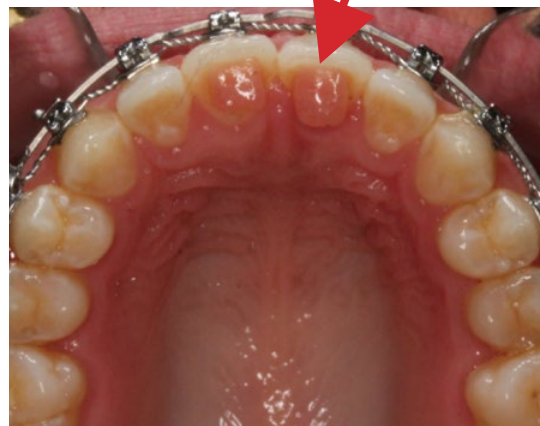
1. Warm salt water rinses (1 tsp salt in an 8 oz glass of warm water)
2. Advil or Tylenol (or whichever medication you normally take for a headache)
3. Soft foods (especially after appointments)



Bite “Turbos”

You may have had some bite turbos placed either on the biting surface of your back teeth or behind your upper front teeth. Sometimes, we may use small rubber “bite bumpers” on the braces on your lower teeth instead. These bite turbos have two main purposes:

1. To keep your upper teeth from biting on the braces on your lower teeth. If your upper teeth are biting on your braces, it can knock them off your teeth or break your arch wire (not to mention, be very uncomfortable!)
2. To keep your upper and lower teeth apart so your teeth will move faster. When your upper and lower teeth are not meshed together, there is less resistance so your teeth straighten out quicker.



Bite turbos are meant to keep your back teeth from coming together, so there is definitely a period of adjustment. It will be difficult to eat at first, but after about a week, you will be used to it and have no problems eating and chewing your food. It is easiest to stick to a soft diet when you first get your turbos on. The turbos may need to stay on for your whole treatment. Be patient. Your turbos help move your treatment along so we can give you the best result in the shortest amount of time possible!

If one of your bite turbos comes off of your front teeth, don't worry about it! We place two bite turbos so you always have a back up! If both of them come off, call us so we can schedule an appointment to replace it. **If** you have turbos on your BACK teeth and one comes off, call us so we can get it replaced. You always need to have two turbos on your BACK teeth (one on each side).

Eating with Braces and Appliances

Yes, you may eat during orthodontic treatment! It may surprise you that most foods can still be eaten after braces or appliances are placed on your teeth.

The wrong types of food or eating the right kinds of food improperly can cause food to get caught in your braces, stick to brackets, loosen braces, or bend wires. Bent wires can cause your teeth to move in the wrong direction! **Consistently having loose brackets will significantly slow down your treatment progress and extend your treatment time!**

Refrain from eating **hard, chewy, or sticky** foods. The following is a list of the most common foods to avoid:

1. HARD FOODS: cause damage by bending wires, loosening cement under the bands and breaking the brackets off of your teeth.

DON'T EAT: Ice, nuts, corn nuts, peanut brittle, Ice, corn-on-the-cob (without cutting it off the cob first), corn chips, Doritos, crisp tacos, Ice, jerky, pepperoni sticks, Ice, hard granola bars or Ice (getting the picture?)



2. COLD STUFF: Ice or popsicles are not only too hard and break your brackets off, but the extreme coldness of them can also loosen the cement. (Ice cream is OK)

3. STICKY FOODS: Damage your braces by bending wires, pulling cement loose and breaking the brackets off of your teeth.



DON'T EAT: Caramels, taffy, tootsie rolls, milk duds, sugar daddy's, sugar babies, snickers, gummy bears, skittles, starbursts or sticky granola bars.

- 4. GUM:** Never chew gum (even the type that says it won't stick to dental work). Chewing gum bends your wires, pulls bands loose and breaks your brackets off.
- 5. POPCORN:** The hulls can get stuck under your gums and cause a very serious infection!
- 6. FOODS HIGH IN SUGAR CONTENT:** Should be avoided whenever possible. If you eat them, do so only at the end of a meal and brush your teeth immediately after. If it is not convenient to brush right away, then always rinse your mouth with water after eating very sweet foods. Sugar is the main cause of plaque build-up on your teeth. Plaque converts sugar to acid, which causes scarring and decay of your teeth.
- 7. SODA POP, FRUIT JUICE AND SPORTS DRINKS:** Soft drinks, fruit juices and sports drinks are extremely high in sugar content and are the number one leading cause of decalcification (white scars on the teeth) during orthodontic treatment. Avoid drinking regular soda pop, fruit juices and sports drinks high in sugar content during treatment. You may drink diet pop, but try to limit it to one per day at the most.
- 8. SUCKING ON LEMONS:** The high acidity of lemon juice will damage the enamel on the surface of your teeth.
- 9. HABITS:** Biting fingernails, "picking" your braces with your fingers or nails, chewing on pens or pencils or chewing on ice can bend the wires and break brackets off your teeth.



WITH EXTRA CARE YOU MAY EAT:

- Carrot and Celery Sticks (if they are cut into small, thin pieces and chewed with your BACK TEETH)
- Apples (cut into thin wedges and chew with your BACK TEETH)
- French Bread or Pizza (you should take small pieces, stay away from the thick edges and be very careful)
- Corn-on-the-Cob (eat very carefully and cut it off the cob first)
- Pork or Beef Ribs (remove the meat from the ribs first)
- Steak and Chicken (cut into small pieces)

We don't want your orthodontic treatment to be a series of "don'ts", but in general, don't put anything (food or object) in your mouth that is HARD, CHEWY or STICKY, no matter how small!

Use a blender to prepare milkshakes, protein drinks, fresh fruits, etc. "Soft" sandwiches such as egg or tuna salad, peanut butter (smooth), and deviled ham are nutritious and easy on tender teeth. "Hamburger Helper" type foods, omelets, and any kind of eggs are excellent.

Don't forget about these soft foods as well:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| • Applesauce | • Canned Pears |
| • Pudding | • Bananas |
| • Jell-O | • Ice Cream |
| • Deviled Eggs | • Soft Cheeses |



Loose Braces

Loose braces do occur. The national average for loose braces when all of the teeth have brackets placed on them is 10%.

Why do braces come loose? First and foremost, braces come loose due to chewing forces. We can bite with 1000 pounds of force per square inch. There is not an orthodontic glue that will withstand that kind of force and still allow for the braces to be removed at the end of treatment. Braces also come loose when the teeth get wet with saliva during the placement of the brackets. Some mouths make it difficult to maintain total dryness during the process of placing the braces. The enamel on some teeth is resistant to the brace gluing process as well. This resistance also occurs if there is a large filling or crown on the tooth in the location where the bracket is placed. Braces can also come loose when playing contact sports if you accidentally get hit in the face or mouth. We will be happy to give you a mouth guard that will fit over your braces and teeth to help protect them. Just ask us and we will be happy to give you one!

If braces fail and come loose, they usually do so early in treatment. If braces come loose later in treatment, it is almost always due to biting forces and not paying close attention to the foods you are eating. Therefore, it is important for us to be in partnership of caring for your braces. We do our job of placing the braces with the utmost attention to detail, and you do your job by not eating or placing things in your mouth that could put excessive forces on the braces and cause them to come loose. Even with this teamwork, braces may become loose at times.



For many years, orthodontic bands (metal rings around the whole tooth) were used on teeth instead of individual brackets. With the advent of bonding adhesive to glue brackets on the teeth, the use of bands has greatly decreased. However, many orthodontists still place bands on the back teeth (instead of brackets) because that is where the strongest biting forces are. At Molen Orthodontics, we use brackets instead of bands on the back teeth for a number of reasons. There are many advantages to using brackets on the back teeth when you have your full set of braces placed:

- It is much healthier for the gums if a band is not forced down onto the gums, as is needed in placing them.
- It is much easier to clean and floss the teeth and maintain proper oral hygiene and healthy gums.
- Your family dentist can take x-rays and look for cavities between your teeth.
- A bracket can be precisely placed in the exact location on the tooth to align it properly. It is very difficult to be this precise with a band.
- At the end of treatment when the bands are removed, there are spaces remaining between the back teeth that still need to be closed.

If we cannot get a bracket to stay on a tooth either because of enamel resistance, a large filling or crown on the tooth, or the patient's bite will not allow it, then a band may be used. We also use bands when placing cemented appliances (expanders, space maintainers, Herbst appliances, etc.)

When all of the teeth are bracketed, there is the chance that more loose brackets may occur, but we feel the trade-off is worth it in the advantages that it offers. Please do your part in watching carefully what you eat and place in your mouth, and we will do our part in straightening your teeth in the shortest time possible with the best result, while giving you a famous "Molen Smile"!



Oral Hygiene with Orthodontics

When do you want to get your braces off? The better your oral hygiene, the sooner you will get your braces off! Low-grade infections and swollen gums create an environment that slows down tooth movement and causes multiple irritations that make orthodontics uncomfortable.

Because of the many types of bacteria in your mouth, it is always important to keep your teeth and mouth clean. It is critical to do so when braces are on your teeth. The braces, wires, springs and ties all act as food traps. If the food is not completely removed, large overgrowths of bacteria result. This in turn causes swollen gums and unpleasant breath.

However, keeping teeth clean is only one part of good oral hygiene. Keeping your gums clean is the other critical part.

Gums (gingiva)

Without braces, food easily moves over teeth and provides some natural stimulation to the gum tissue. When braces are attached, they trap food and there is no natural stimulation of the gum tissue. It is critical that time be spent stimulating your gums with a toothbrush. The gingiva should always be pink in color, firm in texture and symmetrical in shape. They should not be red, puffy, bleeding or irregular in shape.



What Can You Do To Keep Your Gums Healthy?

1. Precisely follow the instructions that have been given to you.
2. Brush your teeth and stimulate your gums regularly after each meal. It takes only about two minutes to adequately brush your teeth and gums.

Try timing yourself:

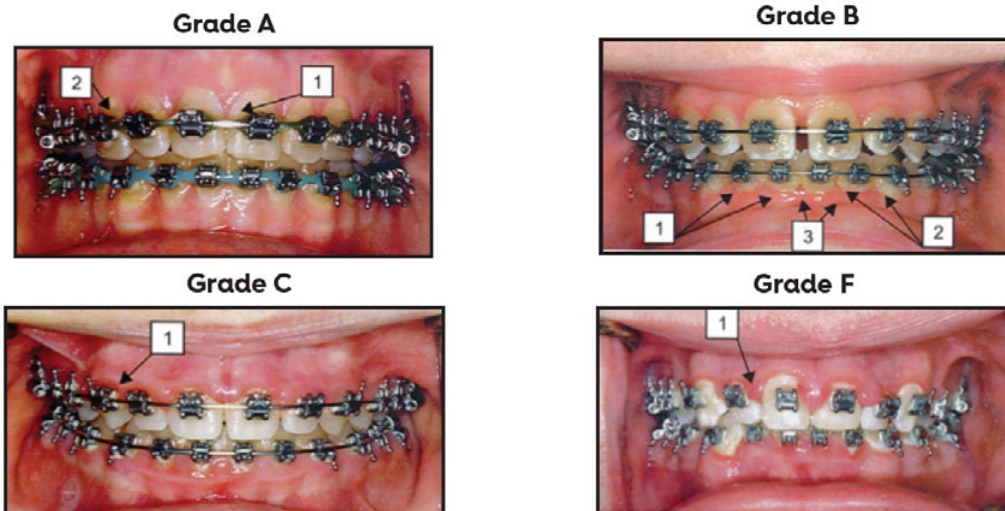
- a. Thirty seconds on the outside of the upper teeth
 - b. Thirty seconds on the inside of the upper teeth
 - c. Thirty seconds on the outside of the lower teeth
 - d. Thirty seconds on the inside of the lower teeth
3. Floss your teeth once daily (at night) using the floss threaders that have been given to you.
 4. Use your fluoride rinse once daily after brushing, being sure to “swish” very well in areas that are hard to clean.
 5. Use a “proxy brush” to clean in between the teeth and stimulate the gums at least once a day.
 6. If for some reason you cannot brush after a meal, swish with water to loosen any food still left on your teeth.
 7. Regular use of a WaterPik or any other oral irrigation appliance can be very helpful but must be used AFTER thorough brushing. It is not a substitute for brushing but can remove food particles that the brush cannot reach.
 8. Warm salt water rinses twice daily (eight-ounce glass of warm water with one teaspoon salt)



The Oral Hygiene Grading System

Every time you come in to the office for an appointment, you will receive a grade on your oral hygiene. The meaning of the grades is:

- A** – The Best! Perfect healthy, pink gums and perfectly clean braces and teeth.
- B** – Good. There are some areas of swelling or redness of the gums and/or one or two areas of plaque or food on the braces or teeth.
- C** – Below Acceptable. There are more than just a few areas of swollen or red gums and/or plaque or food on the braces or teeth.
- D** – Well Below Acceptable. There are many areas of swollen or red gums and/or plaque or food on the braces or teeth.
- F** – Totally Unacceptable. There are no redeeming qualities and the patient almost shows a willful neglect of hygiene.



Some patients exhibit mouth breathing due to allergies, enlarged adenoids, etc. There are also some medications that cause red or swollen gum tissue. If you are one of these patients, please understand that we will offer you even more help. Our staff will also take these factors into account when grading your hygiene.

Always remember: Our staff is not grading you as a person. We are grading only the results of your efforts in this area!



Oral Hygiene Instruction

Our orthodontic assistants will spend a great deal of time instructing and assisting you so that you can develop the high level of oral hygiene required. We will never embarrass or preach to you. We will always teach and remind you of what you may have forgotten. At each appointment you will be graded on your hygiene.

You will be given an oral hygiene kit, which will include some or all of the following:

- Orthodontic Toothbrush
- Traveling Toothbrush
- Toothbrushing Timer
- Floss
- Floss Threaders
- Proxibrush
- Disclosing Toothpaste
- Orthodontic Wax
- Dental Mirror



Where to Brush

One of the common fears about orthodontics is that the bands and brackets may cause decay. Actually, the parts of your teeth that are covered by your orthodontic bands and brackets are protected from decay just as long as the cement under the bands is holding properly.

The bands and brackets, however, do make certain places on your teeth harder to clean. The brackets and wires tend to make a little shelf around the outside of the teeth, and this shelf makes it harder for your toothbrush to clean the spaces between the gums and braces.

If you fail to get the teeth clean and to stimulate your gums, they will swell and make it more difficult to clean.

CONTINUED NEGLECT WILL RESULT IN PERMANENT WHITE MARKS (DECALCIFICATION), DECAY AND SWOLLEN, IRRITATED AND INFECTED GUMS.

When to Brush

Ideally you should brush within five minutes after you eat. This can sometimes be hard to do. When you're away from home, you should carry a travel or folding toothbrush. Toothpaste is not necessary when away from home.



How to Brush

1. First brush back and forth across and between the wires and gums to loosen the food particles. Brush behind the wire from above and below the wire. Take enough time (one to two minutes) and press hard enough to remove the sticky plaque. Be sure to brush under any springs on the arch wires or hooks on the brackets.



Proper brushing technique

2. Next, brush correctly as if you had no braces on.
 - a. Start on the outside of your upper teeth with bristles at a forty-five degree angle toward the gums. Move the handle back and forth using a small, circular motion while the bristles “flex” over several teeth. Move over and repeat for several more teeth until the outside of the upper teeth is completed.



Proper brushing technique

- b. Do the same for the inner surfaces of the upper teeth.
 - c. Scrub the chewing surfaces last.
 - d. Start on the outside of the lower teeth and repeat this process. Remember to direct the brush at an angle toward the gums.



3. Rinse your mouth very well and then rinse off your toothbrush. Look into a mirror to inspect if any areas have been missed. Check the spaces between the brackets and gums. If you see any areas you have missed, clean them now.
4. When you have finished, the brackets and wires should be free of all food particles and the soft white coating (called plaque).

Disclosing Toothpaste

A tube of disclosing toothpaste is given to braces patients at the beginning of treatment. It is very helpful in checking your brushing at home on a regular basis. When you use this toothpaste when you brush, it allows you to see any plaque left on the teeth by staining them the color of the toothpaste. Plaque will only show up if it has been left on the teeth for 24 hours or longer. Only use this toothpaste at night so you don't have a colored tongue before school or work. Don't worry about the stain. It will come right off when you brush the plaque that it stained!

Electric Toothbrushes

We have many inquiries about electric toothbrushes. Sonicare toothbrushes are particularly good for orthodontic patients, but special care must still be taken to brush the part of the tooth nearest the gum tissue as well as the entire tooth surface. The most important thing to remember is that the type of brush is not as important as how well and consistently you use it.

If you have any questions about how to use an electric toothbrush or any oral hygiene appliance that you have, please bring it with you to your next appointment. We will be happy to coach you on its most effective use.



Brushing Your Teeth

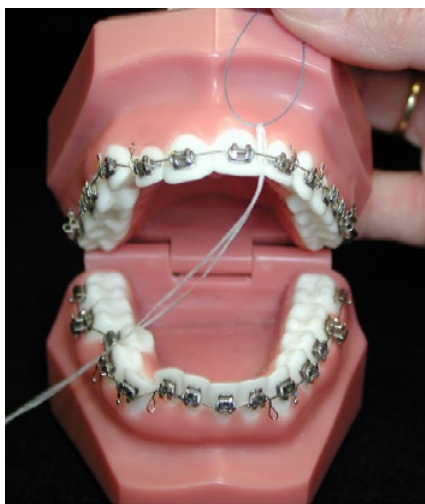
You have been given a collapsible toothbrush for school or work. You should brush after every meal and snack. Please be sure that you carry the toothbrush with you. Remember that severe damage can result if the braces and the teeth are not always shiny and bright. When the bristles show wear, it is time to replace your brush.

Flossing Directions

Only three out of five tooth surfaces can be adequately cleaned with a toothbrush. Dental floss must be used to clean the other tooth surfaces. Flossing should be performed at least once a day, preferably before going to bed.

1. Tear off a piece of floss about eight to ten inches long.
2. Stick the floss through the floss threader and place the threader between the gums and arch wire.
3. Pull the floss half way through.
4. Holding the floss on either end, gently “work” it up and down the sides of the teeth and under the gum line.

Repeat the procedures between each tooth, and rinse thoroughly. Flossing while wearing braces is extremely important!



Floss Threader



Flossing



Molen Moolah Rewards Program

It is imperative that you see your family dentist every (6) six months for a regular cleaning and check-up. This ensures that your teeth and gums stay as clean and healthy as possible. To help you remember how important these appointments are, we are giving you some coupons to take to your dentist and have signed when you see them for your cleaning. Bring the signed coupon back to us, and you will receive Molen Moolah points that can be cashed in for great gift cards! ***Please note that we give you these coupons when you have brackets (braces) placed on your teeth. If you have another kind of appliance without braces at this time, don't worry! You will get these coupons in the future when it's your turn for braces!***

Dental
REWARDS
CERTIFICATE

NAME _____

MOLENSMILES.COM/REWARDS

I am a patient of Molen Orthodontics and participate in their Patient Rewards Program. Patients can earn points for attending regular hygiene appointments, having no cavities, and completing the recommended dental treatments. Returning this completed Dental Certificate at my next orthodontic appointment ensures that points will be added to my rewards card.

DENTIST OR HYGIENIST _____
PRACTICE _____
TODAY'S DATE _____
SIGNATURE _____

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

☐ Dental Cleaning & Exam

☐ No Cavities

☐ Recommended Dental Treatment Completion



Decalcification

DECALCIFICATION MEANS PERMANENT WHITE SCARS ARE ETCHED INTO THE TOOTH ENAMEL. These are caused by improper or negligent oral hygiene habits. This is all too common with teeth that have had “braces”, but can be prevented by you! Decalcification cannot be seen until the actual etching has occurred, and by then it is TOO LATE!

It is absolutely mandatory to brush at least three times per day (after everything you eat would be best), and use your fluoride daily. Research on patients with braces shows that the daily use of fluoride in combination with proper brushing habits eliminates decalcification. Brushing is still needed after drinking anything other than water. Sugar and other food particles tend to sit along the gum line. The brackets and wires act as a shelf, allowing the build-up of plaque, which also will cause decalcification. Onset of this problem can be quite rapid! Soda pop and energy drinks are the biggest cause of decalcification during orthodontic treatment. DO NOT drink non-diet soft drinks or energy drinks during your treatment!

We appreciate your help and support in this area. We want you to have the most beautiful result possible and not be disappointed when your braces come off by having these permanent white scars on your teeth.

Please take this very seriously!!



How Do Teeth Move?

With pressure from your braces and wires, your teeth start to move. The fibers which hold your teeth in position will start to get stretched or squeezed. This is what sometimes causes your teeth to become sore. This is only temporary. Gradually, the bone will make room on the squeezed side and new bone will grow in to support the stretched side. When your teeth are moving, they often times feel “loose”. Don’t worry, this is normal. When they are done moving to their new positions, they will become rigidly fixed in their new positions.

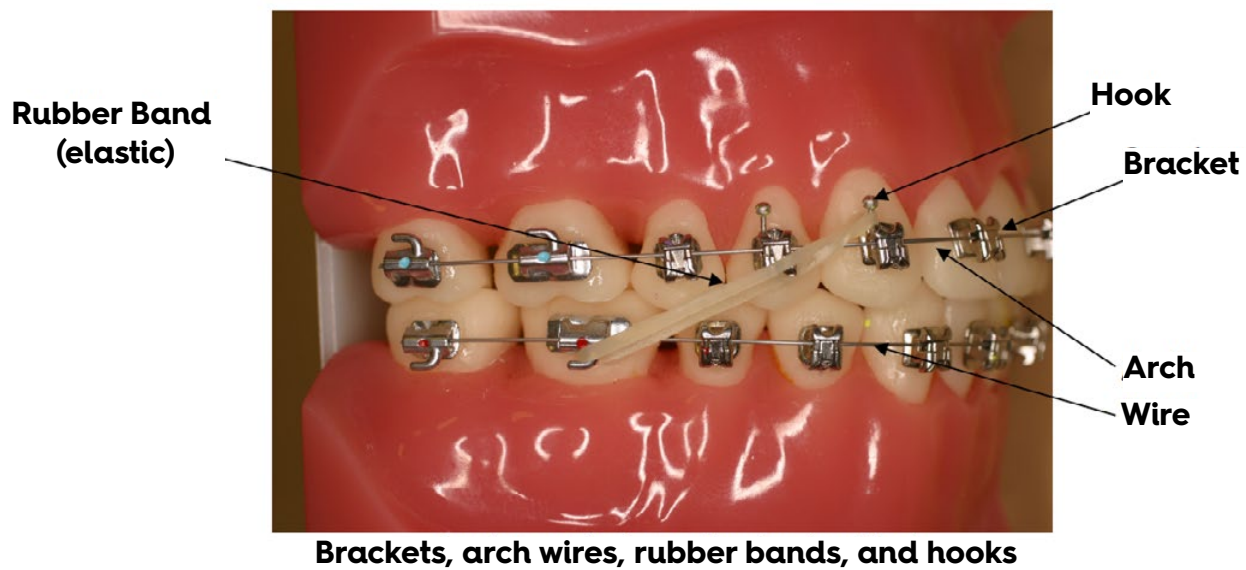
The Parts of Your Braces

Teeth move by using a variety of devices, which together are called the “appliance.” The following diagrams are of the orthodontic appliance. They are provided to aid you in learning the names of the parts of your braces and to better understand their design and function.

The most important parts of your braces are:

1. Brackets: A bracket can be attached to a band or bonded directly to the teeth. They are cemented to the tooth with basically the same white tooth colored material used for fillings. The bonding of brackets has dramatically reduced the time it takes to apply braces. Additionally, it has made the job of keeping teeth clean much easier for our patients.





2. Arch Wires: These wires traditionally were made only of stainless steel. We now have at our disposal arch wires made from various types of titanium. The development of these wires has allowed orthodontists to increase the amount of time between visits. This in turn has benefited the patient in that their busy schedules are not interrupted with orthodontic appointments nearly as much as they were in the past.

3. Elastics (Rubber Bands): These provide a force that helps teeth move and helps fix your bite. They are not used the whole time you have your braces on and sometimes are not necessary at all during treatment.

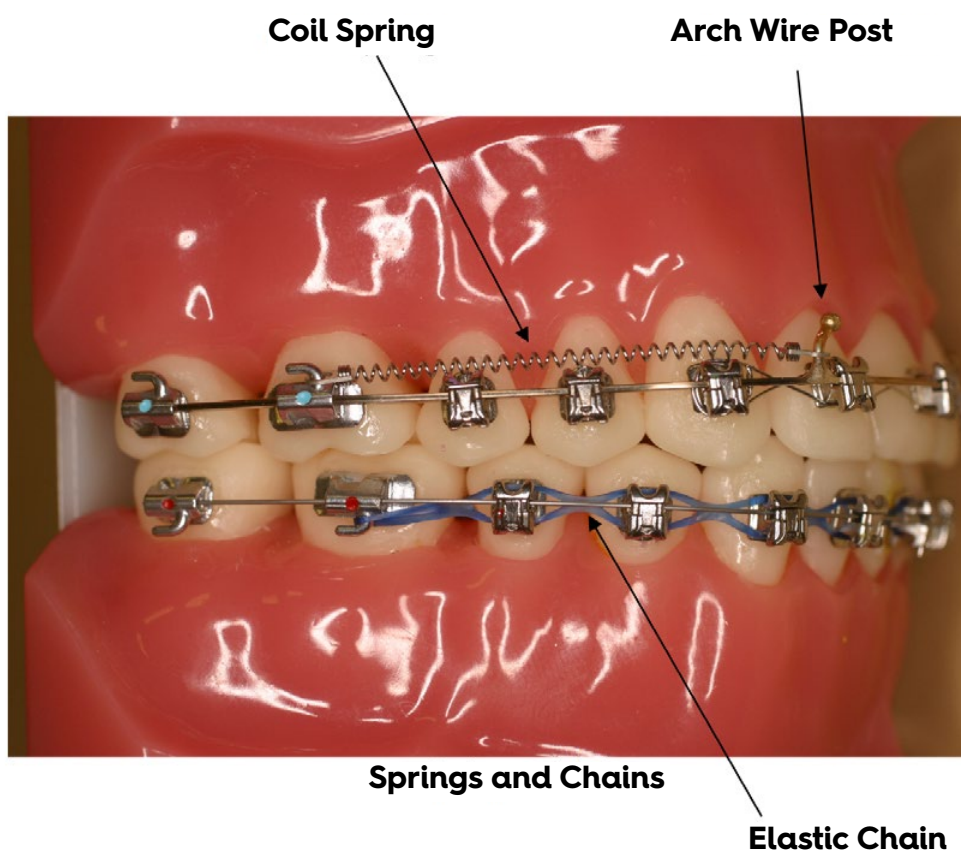
4. Hooks: Some brackets have hooks attached to them. These can be used to attach elastics and/or springs to your braces.



5. Springs: These devices may be made of stainless steel or titanium and can be used in a “push” or “pull” fashion in order to open or close space between teeth.

6. Ties: Ties used to be used to hold the wire in the braces, but with our self-ligating brackets, they no longer serve that purpose. They are only added for looks (if requested by the patient and they receive an “A” grade on their brushing) so if one comes off, don’t worry about it. We will replace it for you at your next appointment.

7. Elastic Chains: These are used to close extra spaces between your teeth.



Damon System Braces and Titanium “Space Age” Wires

The Damon System in combination with titanium wires have brought about the greatest improvement in orthodontics over the past decade. The technology used in these wires was adapted from airplane building and NASA. It is these “space age” wires, used specifically in conjunction with Damon System braces that has allowed us to increase the patient visit interval from four weeks to eight or even twelve weeks in many cases. The wires are more “biological” and “physiological” in the way they work. They apply constant, gentle pressure over long periods of time, which results in minimal soreness of the teeth, fewer interruptions in school and work schedules, and faster treatment time. These wires have an ideal shape which will move your teeth to their perfect alignment and help us create your beautiful new smile! They have a built in “memory” which returns the wires to their original, ideal form. The wire is activated by the warmth of your mouth. Rinsing with warm salt water twice daily will help activate the wires, allowing your teeth to move to their new positions faster.



Elastic (Rubber Band Wear)

There continues to be much confusion concerning the need for and use of elastics. Many patients and/or parents believe that they are a replacement for headgear or some other device. They are not!

Elastics are used for several purposes:

- 1.** To move lower teeth forward and upper teeth backward (or the reverse) simultaneously
- 2.** To close small spaces
- 3.** To help “fit” upper and lower teeth together
- 4.** To assist in correcting upper and lower midline (front tooth) discrepancies
- 5.** To correct cross bites
- 6.** Other minor, individualized uses

Please wear your elastics exactly as directed. Remember each person is different. How and when you wear your elastics may be different than other patients, so please don't compare yourself with others. Participation in this phase of your treatment is not only necessary to finish treatment on schedule but also to achieve an excellent result. Thank you in advance for your full participation!



Retention

Removing the braces signals the start of the retention phase of your orthodontic care. Please remember that this part of your orthodontic treatment is just as important as the active movement phase in determining the ultimate success of your treatment. Once the teeth have been moved into their desired positions, a period of time is needed to stabilize the teeth so the surrounding bone and soft tissues can conform to your new tooth alignment.

How long are retainers worn?

After your braces are removed, we normally will see you for a retainer check appointment three months later to be sure they are still fitting properly and your teeth are remaining in place. After this, you are officially released from treatment, but if you ever have any problems with your retainers or are concerned that your teeth are moving, call for an appointment immediately. We guarantee our standard clear, removable retainers forever against normal wear and tear. If your retainers wear out or crack, bring your final models in to the office along with your worn out retainers and we will make you new retainers free of charge. Retainers are normally worn every night during sleeping hours indefinitely to maintain the desired changes that have been achieved. Just remember, orthodontic retention is a lifetime commitment to a regular schedule of periodic wearing of your retainers.



Will my teeth move back after treatment?

Orthodontists are aware that as time goes by, there may be minor changes in tooth position. The position and fit of teeth generally changes throughout your life, with or without orthodontic treatment. Our goal in the retention phase of your treatment is to limit these changes to the natural process of accommodation while maintaining both a good functional and esthetic result. Your teeth will not move back to their original positions if you wear your retainers as instructed!

Taking care of retainers

Keeping your retainer either in your mouth or retainer case will avoid loss or breakage that will lead to extra expense. Brushing the retainer with cool water and toothpaste and soaking it in a denture cleanser, baking soda water or mouthwash periodically will keep it fresh. Never place your retainer in hot water, as it may become distorted and require replacement. Beware of putting your retainer in your pocket where it may be broken. Also, avoid leaving it out where pets could find it or it may be lost.

What if a retainer is lost or broken?

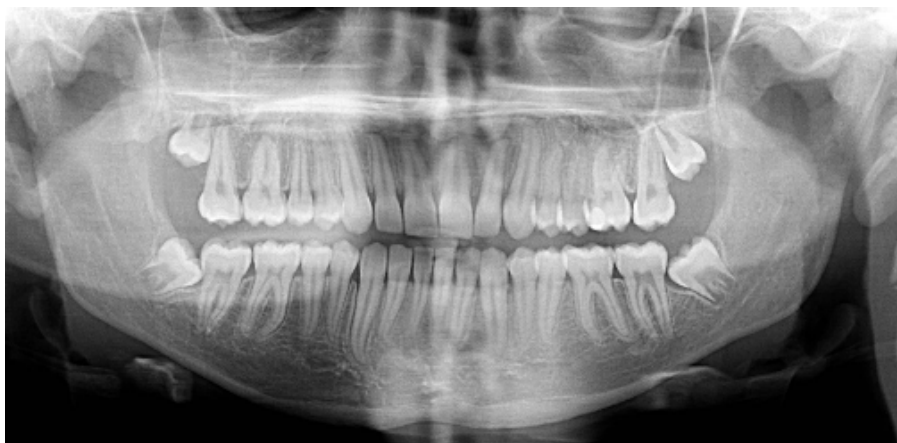
Phone the office right away (during regular business hours) for an appointment to replace your retainer. If your clear, removable retainer breaks due to normal wear and tear, we will replace it free of charge as part of our Lifetime Retainer Guarantee. Bonded retainers are guaranteed forever as well, so if it ever comes loose, call us for an appointment so we can repair it for you.



Wisdom Teeth

Management of wisdom teeth is a particular concern for orthodontists due to their potential to cause problems now and in the future. Wisdom teeth have the potential to cause orthodontic relapse as they attempt to erupt. This is especially evident and most probable with the lower front teeth. To help prevent this problem from occurring, we recommend extraction of the wisdom teeth when the roots are approximately 1/3 formed. This stage of wisdom tooth development occurs anywhere between the ages of 13-18. Many advantages are evident with this timing:

1. Wisdom teeth are much easier to remove prior to complete formation of their roots, thereby making the procedure less invasive for the patient.
2. The main nerve that innervates the lower teeth runs underneath the wisdom teeth. Risk of damage to this nerve is greatly reduced if the roots are not allowed to develop around the area of the nerve canal.
3. Better bone fill occurs in the area of the wisdom teeth when they are removed early.
4. The stability of the orthodontic result is increased when the wisdom teeth are removed early. We will give you a recommendation on the timing of the removal of the wisdom teeth when your braces are removed. If they are not ready to be removed at that time, please work with your family dentist to monitor them and determine the proper timing for their removal.



Problems & “Emergencies”

Lost Separators

If a separator falls out and you know where it came out, use dental floss in that space. If floss passes easily between the teeth and only a couple of days remain before your appointment, it is okay. If the space is tight, use your separator kit to replace it. If you can't get the separator back in, call for an appointment for us to replace it.

Teeth Soreness

Separators and new wires can cause the teeth to be sensitive to pressure. Warm salt water (one teaspoon of table salt in an 8 oz glass of warm water) “swished” in the mouth helps relieve the soreness. Advil or Tylenol (or whatever you normally take for a headache) is also useful. The tenderness should be gone in no more than a week's time.

Irritated Cheeks, Lips, Tongue and Gums

The brackets and bands are rough at first and may cause the soft tissues to become sore. Usually the tissues toughen, but in the meantime, soft wax placed over the offending hardware will smooth it out. Also, warm salt water helps.

Sometimes arch wires bow out into the cheeks and irritate the soft tissue. A ball of cotton over the wire, at least during sleep, relieves the cheeks from this pressure.



Injuries

We are happy to provide a mouth guard to protect your teeth and gums against sport injuries. Please ask us for one if you need it.

If you have an accident, your lips may be cut and the braces may be partly loosened. If you are concerned, please call the office during business hours or call the emergency phone after office hours. If your actual teeth are loose and mobile immediately after an injury, call the office or emergency phone immediately!!

Loosening of Teeth

Loosening of the teeth is common throughout treatment. This is normal and should not upset you. The teeth will again become rigidly fixed following removal of the appliances. Teeth must loosen first so they can move to their new positions.

"Special" Appointment

We have special appointment times available at specific times each day that we utilize for "comfort adjustments". If you feel you have a need for this type of appointment, you will be asked to come during this time only. As a general rule, a special appointment may be made when there is pain, a loose band, a broken arch wire, or something sticking out that you can't take care of. It's important to learn the names of the parts of the appliances. It will help when you call the office to be able to identify what is broken or out of place.



After Hour “Emergencies”

Emergencies in orthodontics are extremely rare. In the event of traumatic injuries, car accidents, sport accidents or severe pain that don't involve the teeth, go to the emergency room or call your family dentist immediately. Any severe pain and situations not covered above may require you to contact our office. If your teeth are traumatized and loosened, call our office immediately! The Doctors can be contacted through our 24-hour emergency number that is provided on our answering machine for these situations. Your call will be returned as quickly as possible.

Broken brackets, loose appliances or pokey wires are *NOT* considered “emergencies”. Emergencies are if you are having a problem that is causing severe pain or swelling that cannot wait until the next working day.

Minor irritations, poking wires, loose brackets or bands, lost or broken retainers or appliances, or problems with retainers or appliances and scheduling questions or billing concerns should be addressed during our regular business hours.



Avoiding Problems and Convenient Solutions

Since each of us is different, our reactions to problems that can occur during orthodontic treatment are different. Some of us could be poked with one of the orthodontic arch wires to the point where a blister or hole may form in the cheek and not be at all concerned, while others react to the loss of a little elastic tie or a small space opening between teeth. Neither of these reactions is wrong.....just different.

Here are some tips to help you follow the most appropriate action during your treatment:

Broken Wire

If a wire breaks, remove the long end from the back and place wax or sugarless gum over the “pokey” end if necessary.

“Pokey” Arch Wire or Spring

Attempt to tuck the wire out of the way with a pencil eraser or a spoon handle or, if you can visualize the wire or spring, use a pair of nail clippers or cuticle cutters to clip it off. If all else fails, place wax over the affected area. Sometimes this also will not correct the problem. If you cannot get yourself comfortable, please call the office.

Loose Band or Appliance

If the band comes off the tooth, place it in an envelope and bring it with you to your next appointment. If the loose band is causing no discomfort and your next appointment with our office is within a few days, you don’t need to remove the band. Keep the area clean by “swishing” with water after each meal.



Loose Bracket

If you discover a loose bracket and it is giving you no discomfort, leave it alone. The bracket may slide along the wire but this will cause no harm. If the bracket comes all the way off, don't worry about it. We will bond a new one on the tooth when you come in.

Broken Chain

Sometimes, an elastic chain running between your teeth to help close spaces up will break. Normally, this will not cause you any discomfort. Leave the chain alone until your next appointment.

Open Bracket Door

If one of the doors on your braces comes open, try and push the wire back into the bracket and close the door with your finger or a pencil eraser. If this is unsuccessful, please call the office. Not having this problem fixed in a timely matter can allow teeth to shift out of alignment and can add up to an additional 6 months to your treatment.

In all of the above cases, please call our office during regular business hours so that we can determine if we need to schedule a special appointment. Most often this is not necessary and we can add time to your next appointment. Therefore, it is vital that you call even if your next appointment is within a day or two.

Puffy or Swollen Gums

Rinsing with warm salt water at least three times daily will be very helpful. Products available commercially from your local pharmacy may also bring you relief. These items include Orabase, Glyoxide rinse and Peroxyl. Please note: If your gums are becoming swollen and puffy, it is most likely due to poor oral hygiene habits.



Canker Sores

Some people seem to be very susceptible to developing canker sores. There is no cure for these sores, but certain precautions can be taken to lessen the severity and the frequency of them.

1. Keep your mouth sparkling clean. Brush properly after every meal and rinse thoroughly.
2. Avoid very hot or very cold foods. Also, if you plan on spending any time in the sun, use a lip balm with a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher and re-apply it often. This will help reduce the chances of having an outbreak.
3. Eliminate these foods: chocolate, nuts, soybeans and brown rice. These foods contain the amino acid arginine, which seems to stimulate canker sores.

The following nutritional regimen can make the episode less severe and shorter, often clearing up the sores within 24-72 hours.

Lysine	500 mg every 3 hours
Vitamin C	500 mg every 3 hours
Acidophilus milk	Once per day
Water	At least 6 glasses per day

Lysine is a natural protein and can be purchased in any health food or drug store. Acidophilus milk is also available at most local supermarkets.



“Easy on Teeth” Recipes

Really Simple Sloppy Joe's

1 lb. ground beef

1 bottle of Heinz chili sauce

1/2 small onion (finely diced)

Mustard

Thoroughly brown the ground beef and diced onions over medium heat in a medium pan, stirring occasionally to make sure the meat breaks up. When thoroughly browned, add 1 bottle of Heinz Chili Sauce, then fill empty bottle 1/3 to 1/2 way with water. Shake to mix remaining sauce and pour into mixture. Reduce heat and simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Spoon mixture on to hamburger buns and spread a dab of mustard.

Doc's Corn Pudding

1 can cream-style corn

2 eggs, well beaten

1 Tbsp either bacon drippings or melted butter

1 ½ Tbsp sugar (or Splenda)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray a 1-quart glass dish. In a bowl, combine the corn, eggs, butter or drippings and sugar and pour into the greased dish. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean.

Easy Noodles Romanoff

Combine one medium onion (chopped), one half pound of cooked noodles, one cup sour cream, one cup cottage cheese and a half cup of grated cheddar cheese in a baking dish. Bake for about a half hour at 325 degrees.



Red Beans, Rice and Sausage

1 pkg Red Beans, Rice and Sausage

1 pkg red beans and rice mix

1/2 lb. smoked or Polish sausage

1 Tbsp butter or oil

1/2 small onion, diced

In a medium saucepan, add butter or oil and onions. Sauté until tender. Add water and the red beans and rice mix to pan. Bring to boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Slice sausage into thin slices and add to the mixture for the last 10 minutes of the simmering. Remove from heat, let stand for 2-3 minutes before serving. This tastes GREAT and is easy to chew and swallow!

Tuna Pasta

1 box of macaroni and cheese

1/2 cup of milk

1 can of tuna

1 can of condensed cream of mushroom soup

Prepare macaroni and cheese per box instructions. Stir in mushroom soup, milk and tuna. Heat to serving temperature. Makes 3 servings.

Potato Pancakes

1 egg

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 diced small onion

1 ½ Tbsp flour

1/8 tsp baking powder

1/8 cup of milk

1 ½ cups of cubed raw potatoes

Blend egg, onion, salt, flour, baking powder, milk and potatoes in blender until smooth. Pour into a greased frying pan to form pancakes. Cook until brown on both sides. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes 6 servings.



Mixed Fruit Smoothies

Quick, colorful and delicious, these four-ingredient fruity shakes are as good-looking as they are good for you.

2 bananas, chilled

2/3 cup strawberries or mango slices

(1) 12-ounce can grape juice or mango, apricot, strawberry, or other fruit nectar, chilled

(1) 8-ounce carton fat-free yogurt

1 Tbsp honey (optional)

Combine bananas; strawberries or mango slices; grape juice or fruit nectar, yogurt, and if desired, honey in a blender container.

Cover and blend until smooth. Pour into six tall, chilled glasses. If desired, sprinkle with ground pistachio nuts. Makes 6 smoothies.

Note: For two-tone smoothies, make mango smoothies and strawberry smoothies. Transfer to separate pitchers or glass measuring cups. Taking a pitcher or cup in each hand, slowly pour both smoothies at the same time into opposite sides of the glass.

Frosty Fruit Smoothie

1 medium banana, peeled and cut into chunks

1 cup orange, pineapple, grape, or apple juice or low-calorie cranberry juice, chilled

½ cup fat free milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

3 ice cubes

In a blender, combine the banana chunks, chilled fruit juice, milk, vanilla and ice cubes. Cover and blend until frothy. Pour mixture into glasses. Serve immediately.



Critter Shake

Place 2 scoops ice cream, 1 tablespoon chocolate syrup and 2 jelly snakes in a blender and process on medium for 30 seconds. Add 2 strawberries, 2 crushed chocolate biscuits and 1/2 cup milk and process on medium for another 30 seconds. Add 1/2 cup crushed ice.

Tangy Cherry Milkshake (sugar free)

3/4 cup (approximately 12) cherries, rinsed and halved

1/2 cup fruit-sweetened cherry yogurt

1/3 cup 1% milk

Sweetener as sweet as 2 teaspoons sugar, such as 1 packet Equal® or NutraSweet® (caution: some people have concerns about aspartame, the primary ingredient) Fully freeze the cherries. Freeze the yogurt for an hour. Thoroughly purée all ingredients in a blender or food processor. Serve immediately. Makes one portion.

Popcorn Alternatives

- Pirates Booty
- Rice Puffs
- Pop Chips

