

## How to look after your brace

### Fixed braces

Looking after your brace well is of huge importance. If you look after it well it will mean that you get a better result, that the treatment will be completed more quickly and that you will suffer less of the possible side effects of having a brace.

### Keeping it clean

This is one of the most important aspects of brace treatment. If you do not keep the brace clean then you may finish treatment with white or brown stains on the teeth that cannot be removed (see figure 1). If we feel that tooth brushing is not at a high enough level we may choose to remove the braces earlier than you would want to benefit the health of the teeth.



Figure 1 – A patient's teeth after the braces are removed. These white and brown marks cannot be removed. They are there because this patient did not keep their brace clean enough and consumed too many sugary foods.

Cleaning should be done with regular tooth brushing (manual or electric). You will want to brush your teeth after every meal and also every morning and night. In addition to using a normal tooth brush we will also advise you to use an interdental brush (see figure 2) underneath the brace to keep it spotlessly clean.



Figure 2. Interdental brushes. We will show you how to use these effectively. There are lots of different types but they can be purchased both from our departments and from most supermarkets.

We also recommend that you use a fluoride mouthwash. This will minimise the chances of getting the white and brown marks on the teeth. This should be used at a time other than when brushing your teeth to gain the maximum benefit. A good example would be at a break from or when you get home from school, college or work.

## Eating

When wearing a brace food is more likely to be held next to the teeth by the brace. Therefore, if sugary foods are eaten then it is more likely that they will damage the teeth. As a result we strongly advise that sugary foods and drinks are kept to a minimum and are certainly not consumed outside of mealtimes.

The brace is designed to be removed at the end of treatment, therefore it cannot be super glued to the teeth or we would not be able to get it off! Therefore, if you eat foods that are too crunchy, tough or sticky then these will also break the brace. When wearing a brace you will need to alter some of the foods that you eat and also cut food up into smaller pieces to avoid breaking the brace.

## What do I do if I break the brace?

Nothing on the brace is meant to be loose and all components we put in are important. Therefore, if anything is loose or anything is missing we need to see you to fix the problem. If left broken then the teeth will move in directions that we don't want them to. If this is left to happen it can cause problems that mean the end result is not as good as we would like and that treatment may take considerably longer than initially intended. Therefore, if the brace is broken please contact us as early as possible on:

Blackburn – 01254 734052  
Burnley – 01282 804190

## Removable braces and functional appliances

We usually ask you to wear removable and functional braces all the time. However, if you do need to remove the brace it is important to keep it safe so we would advise you use a box to keep the brace in (for example when swimming). If you do break the removable brace then contact the number above and we will see you to fix the problem as soon as possible.

Unfortunately if the removable braces are broken we often need to charge you for their repair or replacement. This is currently £74 per appliance.

## Keeping them clean

It is important that during all brace treatment the teeth are kept clean. We would advise that you brush your teeth at least twice a day. When you are wearing a removable brace then you also need to carefully brush the removable brace. This can be done at the same time as brushing your teeth and can be done with a brush and soapy water.