

Living with braces

It will take a little time to get used to your new braces. But a great smile at the end of orthodontic treatment will be well worth it. We hope this fact sheet will answer your questions, and help you learn to adjust to your braces.

Will my mouth hurt for long?

Most youth find their mouths and teeth are a little tender for a few days after having braces put on. It can help to rinse with a salt water solution (add a teaspoon of salt to a glass of warm water). Ibuprofen (Advil®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®) can also help. Speak to your parents about getting this medication for you.

My braces are scratching the inside of my mouth-what should I do?

It usually takes 3 or 4 days for the inside of your mouth to get used to the braces. If you have spots in your mouth that are getting scratched by your braces:

- Use a tissue to dry the part of your braces that is causing the problem
- Place a small piece of wax over this part

If the sore spot doesn't get better within a week, call us for an appointment.

My upper and lower teeth can't touch anymore - is this OK?

Your braces may prevent your upper and lower teeth from touching for a few days. While you're eating, chew gently, and things should get better in a couple of days.

What should I do if a band, bracket or wire comes loose?

Call us right away if a band comes loose. We will need to fix this quickly, as a loose band could hurt your gums, cause decay or weird white spots on your teeth (de-calcification). Remember to follow the food and care guidelines we give you. Bands, brackets or wires that break often can make your treatment longer. If a bracket or wire comes loose:

1. Make yourself comfortable by removing any parts that are loose and poking you
2. Call us

Caring for your teeth and gums

It's very important to care for your teeth and gums when you have braces. Braces are perfect hiding places for bits of food and germs that can cause tooth decay and gum problems (inflammation or infections). Clean teeth and healthy gums help treatment move faster.

Remember to:

- **Brush at least twice a day.** After breakfast and just before bed are the best times to brush. It's even better if you brush after every meal or snack. If you can't brush after lunch at school, make sure you rinse your mouth well with water.
- **Brush with water first.** Wet your toothbrush with water and clean away all bits of food. Then add toothpaste and brush your teeth again.
- **Floss once a day.** Use a floss threader to get under the wire and in between your teeth.
- **Keep seeing your regular dentist.** You'll still need your regular dental check ups and cleanings. These are even more important when you have braces.



Are there foods I should watch out for?

Yes. Hard, sticky and chewy foods are a big problem because they can:

- Break your bands or brackets
- Bend or break your wires
- Damage the cement holding the bands or brackets to your teeth



Be careful with:

- Ice (you can have it in a drink, but don't crunch it with your teeth)
- Apples and raw vegetables, like carrots and celery. Cut these into bite sized pieces first.
- Ribs and chicken wings or drumsticks. Cut the meat off the bone before eating it.

How often will I have to come back for check ups?

We will see you every 6 - 8 weeks in the dental clinic. Our clinic is very busy, so please be on time. If you can't make an appointment, call us as soon as possible. We'll need to re-schedule your appointment.



Numbers to know

CHEO Dental Clinic
613-737-7600 extension 3008

