

# Caring for your teeth, gums and **braces**



Congratulations on starting your journey with braces! They may be uncomfortable at first but with perseverance, braces will soon become your best friend in achieving the smile that you desire. Here are some tips to help you make the most of this journey. Remember, coming to all your appointments mean that you'll maximise your chances of having the braces off as quickly as possible!

## How to look after your teeth and gums

After each meal, vigorously rinse your mouth with water and brush your teeth. Use the **Pikster** brushes to get in under the wires. Every evening (or more often if you can), use **Superfloss** to floss between the teeth. To check that you've cleaned all the plaque from your teeth, use **Colgate Disclosing Tablets** every few nights. These tablets will stain the plaque pink and purple, showing you areas that need more attention. You can also use a **WaterPik** (or other irrigating device) to clean out under the brackets. To further strengthen your teeth, use **Colgate Neutrafluor 220ppm** (alcohol free) rinse nightly. Failing to keep your teeth and gums clean will delay your orthodontic treatment and cause the gums to bleed, become puffy and grow over the teeth. You can also end up with cavities or unsightly white spots after the braces come off—yuck!

## What should I expect?

- ✓ **Spaces and crooked teeth during treatment.** You will see spaces developing between the upper teeth. You could also see teeth crossing over each other—this is all a normal part of orthodontic treatment.
- ✓ **Some discomfort.** It's normal to experience discomfort and pressure initially and after each adjustment. Everyone responds differently, and pain usually settles within a few days. Use paracetamol if necessary. If anything is rubbing on your gums or cheek, use the relief wax provided. If ulcers form, use warm salty rinses to keep the area clean, and try products such as **Bonjela**. If teeth are excessively sore (or loose), then please contact us so we can evaluate the situation.
- ✓ **Initial difficulty talking.** Talking will become easier after a few days. Practice by reading a magazine aloud at home. Remember to keep your tongue to the roof of your mouth. Try to keep your lips together at all times.
- ✓ **Initial difficulty eating.** Start with soft foods, and avoid hard or sticky foods (including chewing gum, Red Skins, toffee etc). Pain is usually worst on the first few nights after an adjustment, so be sure to avoid hard foods while the teeth are tender. Try soft but nutritious foods like chicken soup, mashed potatoes, . Avoid fizzy drinks, sugar and sweets, as these will damage the enamel surface. It is normal to not be able to put your teeth together initially—your body is still trying to “find the bite”.
- ✓ **Loose brackets/wires sticking out.** Contact us as soon as this happens. This is all very normal but should be resolved as soon as practical. Bring any dislodged brackets/wires to your appointment (they are uniquely prescribed for you) so that it can be repositioned.



**Straight teeth but unsightly cavities—  
keep your teeth clean during  
orthodontic treatment to avoid this!**



**Make sure you clean under the wire**



**Keep your gums clean or they will  
start growing over your teeth and  
brackets—eek!**

Remember, braces must NOT be worn for extended periods of time without appropriate supervision by a dentist. Please attend your regular orthodontic visits. Do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions. Enquiry after hours? Please email us [info@flagsmiledental.com.au](mailto:info@flagsmiledental.com.au), and we will get back to you as soon as possible!

**Got a question? Give us a call on (07) 5546 9710. We care about you!**