

LIFE WITH BRACES FACT SHEET

EATING WITH BRACES

Don't worry, you'll be eating popcorn and snacking on potato chips again in no time! However, before you can start enjoying some of the treats you love, you will need to take special care to avoid any foods that could damage your new appliances.

FOODS TO AVOID WITH BRACES:

- Chewy foods — bagels, licorice
- Crunchy foods — popcorn, chips, ice
- Sticky foods — caramel candies, chewing gum
- Hard foods — nuts, hard candies, ice cubs
- Foods that require biting into — corn on the cob, apples, carrots
- Although, technically not food, also avoid chewing the ends of pens or pencils.

These foods can loosen braces, distort wires and even pull braces off your teeth.

FOODS YOU CAN EAT WITH BRACES:

- Dairy — soft cheese, pudding, milk-based drinks
- Breads — soft tortillas, pancakes, muffins without nuts
- Grains — pasta, soft cooked rice
- Meats/poultry — soft cooked chicken, meatballs, lunch meats
- Seafood — tuna, salmon, crab cakes
- Vegetables — mashed potatoes, steamed spinach, beans
- Fruits — applesauce, bananas, fruit juice
- Treats — ice cream without nuts, milkshakes, Jell-O, soft cake

IN CASE OF INJURY TO YOUR JAWS OR TEETH

In case of injury involving your jaws or teeth, be sure to immediately check your mouth and appliances for damage. **If you notice any loose teeth, please contact your dentist.** They have the proper instruments to address loose teeth. If your appliance is damaged, please contact our office immediately. You can temporarily relieve the discomfort by applying wax or rinsing your mouth with warm saltwater.

THE IMPORTANCE BRUSHING AND FLOSSING

When you have braces, it's very important to brush and floss after every meal to keep your teeth and gums healthy throughout your orthodontic treatment. If you need help choosing the right toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss, please ask us and we can help you choose the right products for your teeth and your appliance.

HOW TO BRUSH WITH BRACES

Brush your teeth for two minutes after every meal with a soft-bristled, small-headed toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. As an alternative, you can use a powered toothbrush to increase your brushing effectiveness. Brush the outside and inside surfaces of your teeth using small, gentle, circular motions while positioning the head of the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gum line. Brush your teeth's chewing surfaces and the inside surface of your front teeth using short, gentle, back-and-forth motions. Pay close attention to the areas around your brackets or other appliances.

HOW TO FLOSS WITH BRACES

Flossing after every meal will help keep your teeth and braces clean, which will also help keep your treatment time on track. To floss with braces, use a floss threader or special orthodontic floss to thread the floss behind each wire. Wrap the ends of the floss around your pointer fingers of both hands, leaving a few inches of taut floss between them. Gently slide the floss between each set of teeth using a back and forth motion. Floss the sides of each tooth beneath the gum line to remove plaque and food particles. Repeat this process until you've flossed all of your teeth. If you find that your floss is not removing all of the food particles between your teeth and around your braces, ask us about a water flosser!