



# ALL ABOUT YOUR BRACES



**\*IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS NOW THAT YOUR BRACES ARE PLACED\***

## HYGIENE AND TEETH CLEANING

As you eat, your teeth and braces collect food. If this food isn't removed after each meal, bacterial plaque forms and produces acid which is harmful to your teeth. Neglecting to remove plaque after eating may lead to:

**\*Cavities (caries)**- Cavities are caused by bacteria left on the tooth structure which thrive on sugars and refined carbohydrates. Regular dental visits with your general dentist are needed to check for clinical and radiographic (x-rays) signs of tooth decay.

**\*White Spot Lesions**- demineralized, unhealthy areas of enamel that form **permanent** bright white markings on the teeth, usually around the brackets or gum line. White spot lesions form when plaque is continually left on the teeth or with soda consumption. They may progress to cavities or can remineralize with continual good hygiene habits and fluoride rinses.

**\*Gum Inflammation (gingivitis)**swollen, red and inflamed gums that may bleed. It is important to care for your braces and gums. Cavities and gum disease may be avoided by regular good brushing and flossing. If your gums are swollen and inflamed, your teeth will not move as easily and you will experience more discomfort during your treatment.



**WHITE SPOT  
LESIONS  
(PERMANENT)**



**GINGIVITIS**





# DAILY FLUORIDE RINSING

After brushing and flossing your teeth thoroughly before bed each night, rinse with your brand of mouthwash according to the manufacturer's directions (usually 1 capful for 30-60 seconds). **Do Not** swallow the mouthwash. According to scientific research, the use of daily fluoride mouth rinse reduces the chances of getting cavities by approximately 80%.



**PHOS-FLUR AND ACT ARE GOOD BRANDS OF MOUTH RINSE. MAKE SURE THAT THE MOUTH RINSE YOU CHOOSE CONTAINS FLUORIDE.**

**RINSE ACCORDING TO THE MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS AND SPIT OUT ALL THE MOUTHWASH. DO NOT RINSE WITH WATER, EAT, OR DRINK AFTER USING FLUORIDE MOUTH RINSE.**



# PROPER USE OF YOUR TOOTHBRUSH

Carefully brushing your teeth in the morning, after meals, and before bedtime effectively reduces plaque buildup. Use a **SOFT** bristle toothbrush or electric toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Start brushing the outside surface of your teeth in a circular motion while tilting the toothbrush upwards and downwards to get behind the wire. Be sure to tilt the bristles into the area right next to the gums. This area is especially susceptible to bacteria. Then brush the inside surface of your teeth in a back and forth motion. Finally, brush the chewing surfaces of your teeth and the surfaces of your tongue. Spit all the toothpaste out, but do not rinse with water after. Take a second look for any fuzzy plaque and re-brush any missed areas.

## OTHER USEFUL BRUSHING AIDS:

- Proxabrush (interdental or go-between brush). Proxabrushes are helpful brushing tools to brush around the brackets, under the wire, and between some people's teeth above the gum line.



**MAKE SURE TO ANGLE THE BRISTLES UNDER THE WIRE**



**BRUSH THE FRONT OF YOUR BRACES USING SMALL CIRCLE MOTIONS**

**ANGLE YOUR BRISTLES ON THE TOP AND BOTTOM OF THE BRACKETS AND ALONG THE GUMLINE.**



**BRUSH ALL OF THE CHEWING SURFACES OF YOUR TEETH**

**DON'T FORGET TO BRUSH YOUR TONGUE AND ALL OF THE TONGUE SIDES OF ALL YOUR TEETH**



# DENTAL FLOSS/WATER FLOSSERS

Flossing is still necessary, even while you have braces. Used correctly, dental floss helps remove food and bacteria from between the teeth and under the gums that cause gingivitis and cavities. You should floss at least once a day, preferably before bedtime. Flossing with braces can be difficult, using a floss threader or one of these other flossing tools will aid the process.



**PLACE THE FLOSS THROUGH THE LOOP OF THE FLOSS THREADER AND GUIDE IT UNDER THE WIRE**



**GUIDE THE FLOSS BETWEEN THE TEETH**

## OTHER USEFUL FLOSSING AIDS

- Waterpik/ Water flosser
- Superfloss
- Platypus floss sticks



**GENTLY MOVE THE FLOSS UP AND DOWN BETWEEN THE TOOTH AND UNDER THE GUM A FEW TIMES. MOVE THE FLOSS TO THE ADJACENT TOOTH AND DO THE SAME. IF THE GUMS BLEED, THAT IS USUALLY AN INDICATION TO DO IT MORE REGULARLY. MOVE ON TO THE NEXT TOOTH.**



# REGULAR DENTAL / PERIODONTAL VISITS

## IT TAKES TEAMWORK



Although you have orthodontic visits generally every 4-8 weeks, it is very important to see your general dentist every 6 months, or as recommended by your dentist. Regular care like cleanings and examinations with x-rays to look for cavities (caries) are essential for a healthy orthodontic outcome.

Some patients with special dental needs may need to see their general dentist or periodontist (gum/bone dental specialist) to maintain optimal dental and periodontal (gum/bone) health for safe tooth movement. Please follow your general dentist's and periodontist's recommendations for regular maintenance visits.



**CALL OR TEXT OUR OFFICE WHEN YOU HAVE A SCHEDULED DENTAL CLEANING OR VISIT. WE WILL COORDINATE REMOVING THE WIRE OR BRACKET FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT. IF ANY BRACKETS NEED TO BE REMOVED, PLEASE LET US KNOW FROM WHICH TEETH THEY NEED TO BE REMOVED.**