

BRACES----The First 5 Days

1. At first, your mouth treats your new braces like food. You will note excess saliva and feel like you have to swallow a lot. This may last 20 minutes to several hours after braces are placed.
2. Braces feel strange to your lips and tongue. Some people will move their lips over their braces like a bunny rabbit. Others may try and touch their braces with their “curious” tongue. In a day, this type of “checking it out” activity goes away.
3. Your bite will feel different as the teeth move. If you have lower braces, you may also have “bite bumps” or “bite turbos”, little braces or bonding buttons on the inside or on the biting surfaces of some teeth. These are designed to prevent you from biting hard against your braces and may take 3-5 days to feel “normal”.
4. The “glue” that holds the braces on your teeth is similar to the material we use to fill teeth. It is strong, but it takes up to 48 hours to set completely. Softer foods like pasta...versus “steak” will be more comfortable and allow setting.
5. Please look at the diet and care cards we have given to you (diet & care instructions are also on this web site). Hard and sticky foods are the enemies of braces. They may break braces which in turn will lengthen treatment time and require additional office appointments. Enjoy your food, but take it easy!
6. Look at all the things we have given you to keep your teeth clean and comfortable! Many patients will have a water bottle filled with tooth cleaning instruments...many of which you likely have seen in your pharmacy. Clean teeth and gums are more critical when braces are on your teeth.
7. Brush your teeth at least 2 times each day...once after breakfast and once after dinner. If you are able to brush after lunch, this is an added benefit to your teeth. We strongly recommend that you have a lighted magnifying mirror (make-up or shaving mirror) which can be used to check the teeth after brushing has been completed. These special magnified and lighted mirror checks should be done 2 times each day.

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8. For the first week a child or teen has braces, parents should check the brushing at least once per day. Use a flashlight if you need more light—and then show your child/teen in the magnifying mirror where they have missed. The goal is to teach them to look for food debris (plaque).
9. Young patients from 7-17 should be rinsing with a fluoride rinse before going to bed. If your dentist has not prescribed one, try something like ACT.
10. Most patients have no need for “wax”, and indeed, we want the lips and cheeks to toughen up to the braces. This usually happens in the first 5 days. Wax may be used if a sore develops by drying of an irritating area and pushing a little piece of wax on to the “rough” spot.
11. The new high technology wires are activated by body heat. If the new braces feel really tight, rinsing with ice water will temporarily reduce the pressure feeling. Please remember...do NOT chew the ice!
12. While most of our patients take no pain medication, if the teeth remain sore, then using an age appropriate non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (like Advil or Motrin) or Tylenol will provide relief. If teeth are sore after braces are placed, it will usually last only 1-3 days. If you are taking medications or have special medication needs, please check with your physician.

You are on your way to a healthy good looking smile....and any temporary inconveniences will be well worth it in the end!