

# Tooth Separators or “Spacers”

1. Teeth normally contact each other very tightly. To make the placement of wrap-around braces (bands) as comfortable as possible for you, we must space or “separate” the teeth so the braces slip on easily. Spacing may be accomplished by different means, depending on the individual needs of the patient.
2. Separators are either miniature rubber bands or small wire clips. Both act by gently wedging the teeth apart. Once the space has been gained the separators sometimes fall out. **If a separator comes out, there is no need for you to worry or call the office unless you are unable to replace the separator or easily pass floss between the spaced teeth.** It is best to avoid gum or sticky candy. If separators are accidentally swallowed, do not be concerned as they are harmless when they pass through the digestive system.
3. If you have a silver wire clip separator which has a loop that can be seen on the side of the teeth, you must be careful not to allow this loop to be pressed under the gums. If this does occur, a toothpick may be used to bring it up into normal position. If you have a gold wire type with a twisted end (pigtail), you may have some irritation if the end loosens. With a pencil eraser the twisted end may be re-tucked back between the teeth to prevent soreness.
4. Separators may give rise to tooth and/or gum tenderness. Soreness of the gums, tongue or cheek may be relieved by rinsing with hot salt water before each meal ( $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt in a glass with water as hot as can be tolerated). If tooth tenderness is present, age appropriate non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like Advil or Motrin) or Tylenol may be used. Soreness should last only 1-3 days if it occurs at all. If questions or problems arise, please call.