PARK LANE ORTHODONTICS

EMBRACING YOUR FUTURE SMILE

Care of Your Fixed Braces

Damage caused by poor oral hygiene and diet including too many sweets and fizzy drinks.

You are now wearing fixed braces and you need to take great care of them. Treatment takes, on average, 18-24 months from the day the brace is fitted.

1. Clean your teeth after each meal and before going to bed. This will take longer than normal as you need to clean around the gums and brackets thoroughly. We recommend the use of a small 'interdental' brush to clean between the teeth and under the appliance wire. You will also need to use a Fluoride mouth-rinse daily to protect your teeth. Without these measures, your teeth may be irreversibly damaged. Never attend the surgery without having carefully brushed your teeth. Get into the routine of keeping your appliance clean from the start; it makes the treatment considerably easier for everyone.

2. Avoid eating hard foods such as sweets, chocolate bars or crusty bread; as these may damage the braces. Continued breakages of the braces lengthen treatment and may result in the orthodontist stopping treatment early if there is no improvement. Also avoid sugary foods between meals. You should avoid all fizzy drinks during treatment. The acid in these drinks attacks your teeth directly. This is regardless of whether you brush your teeth immediately afterwards. It is permissible to chew sugar-free gum.

3. Since it will be necessary to clean your teeth after every meal (including at school or the workplace), you will find it easier to keep your brace clean if you avoid snacks between meals.

4. Telephone (0118) 9411628 if your brace breaks or becomes loose.

5. You may experience discomfort for a day or two after a change of wire. A mild analgesic such as Ibuprofen ('Neurofen') is ideal for paid relief. If you have been advised by your doctor to avoid ibuprofen an alternative is paracetamol.

6. Sometimes the components of the brace may rub against the inside of your lips. You can obtain soft wax from the practice, a small amount of which is applied to the sharp part of the brace. Keep some with you during the day and another pack at home.

7. You should continue to attend your dentist for regular check ups during your orthodontic treatment.

Diet

To ensure treatment runs smoothly and efficiently it is important to avoid certain foods that may break the brace. Hard foods such as raw vegetables and apples should be cut into small pieces. French bread and pizza crusts are common brace breakers! Chewing sticky sweets, gum and toffees should also be avoided.

It is also important to reduce your intake of erosive drinks such as fizzy drinks and fruit juices. Similarly, sugary drinks such as squash, should be limited to meal times.

Cleaning

You will be provided with a starter pack which includes everything you need to look after your teeth and brace.

When you have a brace it will take slightly longer to clean your gums and teeth. Ideally, you should brush after every meal. It is important to pay particular attention to the gum-tooth junction. If your gums bleed it is usually a sign of inflammation caused by a build up of plaque. Meticulous cleaning will resolve the inflammation and bleeding. Inter-space (spiral) brushes should be used in addition to a normal toothbrush, in order to clean between the brackets and under the wire. Poor brushing not only leads to swollen gums but may also cause early decay (decalcification) that shows up as white marks on the teeth.

Disclosing tablets can be used to identify areas that are not being brushed properly. The tablets should be chewed for one minute with the saliva being spread over all tooth surfaces using your tongue. Areas of plaque will be stained pink or purple and should be removed with further brushing.

Fluoride Mouthwash should be used daily to help protect the teeth. Use the mouthwash at a separate time to brushing your teeth to gain the maximum benefit.

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