



ASHBURN  
PEDIATRIC DENTAL CENTER  
(703) 726-4333

## ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCE FACT SHEET

### Braces

Congratulations!!! You have just begun the process of straightening your teeth and bite. This will lead to the lifelong benefit of a spectacular smile. Remember, we are a team in achieving our goals. Without your help, we will not be successful. Here is some important information regarding your braces. I like to call this my “Braces Survival Guide.”

### Braces Survival Guide

- You are being provided with a kit that will help you adjust to your braces. This kit contains items that will help you keep your teeth clean as well as get you through the adjustment period.
- Braces are something completely new to your mouth. There will be a period of adjustment. For most patients, this usually lasts a few days. Expect that your teeth will get sore and you might develop some areas of irritation along your cheeks, lips and gums. You might also notice increased saliva and slight speech impairment. This is normal and will go back to normal. It’s like having a new pair of shoes that are a little snug in some areas. After wearing them for a few days, you get used to them.
- **Use the items in the kit to help you adjust:**
  - **Wax** is used to cover areas that are causing irritation. The wax will stick best if the area is dry before application. The area can be dried with a tissue or Q-tip. Take a small piece of wax between your finger and thumb and roll it into a ball. This will soften the wax and make it easier to apply. Just push the soft piece of wax on the area that is bothering you. Don’t worry if you swallow the wax. It won’t hurt you. If the wax won’t stick, some patients like to get a wet cotton ball and place it in the area of irritation. This acts like a pillow and is especially useful at night.
  - **Benzodent** can be applied to areas that are already irritated. Benzodent will form a layer over top of the irritation that will prevent it from getting worse. It also has a medicine in it that will numb the area and make it feel better while it is healing.
  - **Rincinol** can be swished in your mouth (and then spit out) when you have a lot of small areas of irritation. It will have a similar effect as the Benzodent.
  - **Peroxyl or Warm Salt Water** can also be used to rinse (and then spit out) to make areas feel better. These will both help to keep irritated areas clean and help them heal faster.
  - The **Bite Wafer** is used to exercise your teeth. During the first few days you want to eat a softer diet. This is more comfortable since your teeth might be a little sore. Exercising your teeth with the bite wafer will help the blood flow around your gums and make the soreness go away faster.

- Each patient is unique, and their needs are different. For some people, the use of an over-the-counter medicine similar to that taken for a headache can be used to help the soreness. If this is needed, it is usually only for a day or two.

- **Cleaning your teeth and braces:**

- Keeping your teeth and braces clean is one of the most important things that you can do to guarantee a good result. Poor oral hygiene during braces can lead to increased treatment time, poor overall results, and staining or cavities on the teeth.
- You should try to brush your teeth after every meal. You are being provided with a **Travel Toothbrush** to keep in your pocket.
- The **Hourglass Toothbrush Timer** should be used at home while brushing your teeth. This timer lasts three minutes. It takes longer to clean around and under your braces, so use this timer to make sure that you are not brushing too quickly.
- Use the **Proxy Brush** to get under the wires and above the braces. The area between the braces and gums is commonly missed by patients with braces. Be sure this area is clean.
- You need to **Floss** your teeth at least once a day while wearing braces. Use the **Floss Threader** to get the floss under the wire.
- The **Toothbrush** provided is specially designed for braces, making it easier to get around your wires and brackets.
- The **Toothbrush Guide** should be hung on your bathroom mirror so that you can be reminded of the proper way to brush and floss with braces.

- **Food and Drink Restrictions:**

- Avoid sticky foods such as taffy, caramels, gummy candies, starburst, skittles, and gum as they might loosen the bands. Also, avoid hard foods such as ice, nuts, and hard candy as these might cause a bracket to become loose.
- Certain foods such as apples will need to be cut up and then eaten. Don't bite into an apple as this might cause your braces to become loose.
- Carrots can still be eaten, but they should be cut into long, thin pieces that aren't hard.
- Avoid crunchy bread or bagels.
- You can eat popcorn, but only a piece at a time. This way you can make sure there are no kernels that you might bite down on.
- Limit the number of sugary drinks that you have in one day. Too many can lead to cavities.

Please read the information provided in your kit thoroughly. Remember that everyone goes through this initial period of adjustment. Taking good care of your braces and following our instructions will ensure a pleasant experience for both of us.

## **Emergencies**

If you have an after-hours emergency that cannot be resolved after following the instructions provided, please call Dr. Joe on his cell phone at (703) 597-8558.