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Fixed Appliance Instructions

You have been fitted with a fixed appliance because it is the best way to correct your teeth. Removable appliances (clip on braces) can only perform a limited range of tooth movements, and we have decided on fixed brace for you because it is the most efficient, and sometimes the only way to carry out your orthodontic treatment.

These braces are quite uncomfortable when they are first fitted but after a few days everyone gets used to them and the discomfort soon disappears. You may find yourself living on a soft diet for a week or so. Painkillers (as you would take for a headache) are often necessary in the first 5 days after your brace is fitted or adjusted.

A few simple rules are essential when you have a fixed brace:

- **Keep your brace and teeth absolutely clean**. Brush at least 3 times a day with fluoride toothpaste. Plaque will cause your teeth to decay, become discoloured and fillings may become necessary. These are most commonly seen as white marks and are essentially permanent scars on your teeth.

- **Look after your appliance.** Avoid toffees, chewing gum, boiled sweets, nuts and tough or sticky things: they will pull the brackets off (they are only stuck on with an adhesive) and cause you more discomfort from loose wires.

  The brackets take a long time to put on, and often we are not able to replace them immediately. Inevitably, therefore, loose brackets will increase the time you have your brace on and at a crucial stage in treatment can add up to six months or more to your treatment.

  We would recommend you use an **alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash** every day at a different time to brushing. We suggest Colgate FluoriGard Daily Mouth Rinse (Sodium Fluoride 0.05% w/w (225ppm F)).

- **Keep your appointments.** The appliance needs to be adjusted regularly (every 6-12 weeks) and failed appointments increase the time you need to keep the brace on.

- **If there is anything painful, loose or sticking out please contact the surgery immediately.** If any of the attachments come loose, please save it and bring it with you so it can be replaced.

- **Wear your retainers.** When your treatment is complete, after about 18-24 months on average, your fixed appliance will be removed and more often than not a removable

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retainer is fitted. This must be worn exactly as advised, and nowadays we favour longterm retainer wear. If you don't wear you retainer your teeth will very quickly revert to pre-treatment condition.

Foods and Habits to Avoid During Fixed Brace Treatment

Avoid **sticky**, **chewy**, or **hard** foods, or any habits you have that may break your brace.

Examples of these are:

- Chewing pens, biting nails
- Using teeth to tear Sellotape
- Chewing gum
- Caramels, sticky sweets, toffees
- Fizzy pop
- Sports/energy drinks

Also, please avoid biting into anything like **apples, raw carrots or hard crusty bread**. You may eat these things, **just cut them up and eat them carefully,** or choose softer alternatives.

Please compare the food you eat with the examples above - if they have that kind of consistency, avoid them!

Breaking your brace delays treatment as we have to drop back to lighter wires when we repair it.

Thanks for being careful!

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Dietary Advice for Patients with Fixed Appliances

The brace is reasonably strong but it can be broken by hard, sticky and chewy foods. These foods MUST be avoided.

It is particularly important to take extra care of your teeth during orthodontic treatment. This is because plaque gathers around the edges of orthodontic appliances and can cause permanent white marks, brown marks and cavities. Plaque must be carefully brushed away several times a day.

Plaque is a sticky layer of bacteria which live on your teeth and gums. These bacteria feed on sugar and produce acids which cause tooth decay and gum disease. Acid is also found naturally in fruit and fizzy pop and is of concern as it may cause erosion of the tooth surface.

If frequent snacks are eaten the teeth are more at risk.

Any pre-packed foods that are purchased frequently contain sugar under another name (e.g. glucose, sucrose, fructose, lactose).

Key Rules with Fixed Braces:

1 **Teeth should be brushed with FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE at least 3 times a day for 3 minutes at a time. Ideally you should carry a brush with you to school or work and brush after every meal including snacks.**

2 **Snacks and drinks that contain sugar SHOULD BE AVOIDED especially between meals.**

3 **Acidic and fizzy drinks SHOULD BE AVOIDED.**

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4 **Avoid hard, sticky, crunchy foods that can break your brace and slow your treatment progression.**

5 **Use a Fluoride mouthwash once a day after you have brushed your teeth. This will strengthen the enamel of your teeth. These can be obtained from the chemist or at the reception.**

Fixed Appliance Kit

This kit is especially designed for orthodontic patients undergoing fixed appliance treatment. This will help ensure your oral hygiene will be kept up to a consistently high level throughout your treatment. This kit contains: Disclosing tablets, Wax, Small Interdental Brushes, orthodontic toothbrush and FluoriGuard Mouthwash.

Disclosing Tablets

These pink tablets highlight any areas of plaque in the mouth that might have been missed after brushing. Use these tablets every evening for the next 1-2 weeks. After having your evening meal brush your teeth with a regular toothbrush, then put a tablet in your mouth and chew for about 40 seconds, after that lick around all surfaces of your teeth and gums, have ONE rinse out with water. Take a look in the mirror, any areas of pink left are the areas of plaque that you have missed, if so brush again to remove any traces.

Wax

As your lips and cheeks aren't used to objects being on the fronts of your teeth certain brackets might start to rub and your lips sore or cause ulcers. If this happens dry the bracket off with a clean handkerchief or tissue, take small piece of wax, roll it into a ball and squash it over the bracket. This provides a smooth surface for the lips to heal. You will need to carry it with you as the wax comes off regular due to saliva in the mouth.

Interdental Brushes

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These brushes are to be used after every meal, after you have brushed with your regular toothbrush. Take the Interdental brush and insert vertically in between each bracket, behind the wire. This will remove food deposits that collect in between the braces. The brushes are then rinsed and re-used. Take care as rough use could bend the wire thus delaying the treatment.

FluoriGard Mouthwash

In addition to brushing daily with a fluoride toothpaste we would suggest the daily use of fluoride mouthwash to further protect against cavities and white marks forming around your brace. Such marks are ENTIRELY PREVENTABLE with good oral hygiene and diet. It is best to use mouthwash at a different time to when you brush.

POLITE NOTICE TO ALL PATIENTS

Please be aware that if any orthodontic appliance is lost or damaged beyond repair, the NHS requires the patient to pay the full cost for the appliance (the cost will be given to you by the nursing staff) prior to a new one being made, you can notify the Health Authority who will in turn send out a claim form for you to attempt to claim a refund.

The charge is payable by everyone, regardless of exemption status.

Please note that emergency appointments are daily
(These are sit and wait appointments in which we aim to see patients ASAP. These are at 09:00am and 2:00pm)

All patients **must ring** the practice to make an emergency appointment.

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An orthodontic emergency typically involves **severe pain**, significant **swelling** of the face or gums, or an **injury** to the mouth and jaw. Most common brace issues are not true emergencies and can be managed at home until your next scheduled appointment or next available appointment.

Please DO NOT just ‘‘**turn up‘‘** at the surgery as we cannot guarantee you will be seen

We aim to provide emergency treatment as soon as possible. We would advise patients to contact the Practice during our normal opening hours. It is important that you **telephone to make an appointment**.

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