

Brushing

It's more important than ever to brush and floss regularly when you are wearing braces, so the teeth and gums are healthy after orthodontic treatment. Patients who do not keep their teeth clean may require more frequent visits to the dentist for a professional cleaning. Adults who have a history of gum disease should also see a periodontist during orthodontic treatment.

We recommend that you use a soft bristled toothbrush with light to moderate force and a toothpaste containing fluoride. Place the toothbrush at an angle so you feel the bristles in your gums and use small circular motions. Completely clean each surface of every tooth including the areas above, below and between each brace. Each surface of every tooth should be scrubbed with 10 strokes of the toothbrush. This should take 2-3 minutes.

We recommend that you brush at least 4 times per day: after breakfast, after lunch (or as soon as you get home from school), after supper and at bedtime. Your toothbrush will wear out faster because of your appliances, so be sure to replace it whenever the bristles start to fray.



Step 1: Use a soft toothbrush with a small amount of toothpaste. Completely clean each surface of every tooth in your mouth, including the areas above, below and between each brace.



Step 2: Use circular, vibrating motions around the gum line. Scrub each surface of every tooth with 10 strokes of the toothbrush. This should take 2-3 minutes.



Step 3: Brush every tooth slowly. Brush the upper teeth down.



Step 4: Brush the lower teeth up. Don't forget to brush your tongue and the roof of your mouth.

Remember that a toothbrush cannot reach everywhere. You must also floss between your teeth, use the small interdental brush (Proxabrush), rinse with Listerine, and rinse with fluoride.

Flossing

Dental floss is thread that is used to remove food and plaque from between the teeth. Flossing is more difficult when you have braces on your teeth but just as important. Remember, with practice, it gets easier! Flossing is important and should be done every day. The best time to floss is before bedtime after brushing to remove the plaque missed by brushing. If your gums are not healthy, they may bleed the first week or two you floss but this is normal as your gums get used to your new routine. Remember that consistent brushing and flossing will result in a great orthodontic smile.

Use a piece of floss about 12 inches long. Use the floss threader to get the floss under the wire. Slide the floss up and down along the tooth surface. When the tooth is clean the floss will "squeak" as you slide it up and down along the tooth surface. Be very careful not to pull with too much force on your archwire.



Step 1: Carefully pull floss between wire and braces using a floss threader.



Step 2: Floss carefully around the gum area. Insert the floss between the teeth and wrap the floss around the curved part of the tooth. Slide the floss up and down on each of the two teeth. When removing the floss, be careful not to pull or damage the wires or brackets.

Interdental Toothbrush



An interdental toothbrush (Proxabrush) is another aid you may find useful to keep your teeth, braces and gums clean and healthy. It can be used to clean under orthodontic wires and around braces. Use this device slowly so you do not damage your braces.

Topical Fluoride (ACT)



Fluoride is a natural mineral that can safely strengthen teeth to help prevent tooth decay and decalcification (white spots) which are usually caused by acids released by bacteria found in plaque. It is not a substitute for tooth paste. Its action is twofold: to re-mineralize tooth enamel which has been exposed to bacterial acids and to act as an antibacterial agent. It is especially important for patients with braces to take the extra time to care for their teeth so that they do not become damaged during orthodontic treatment.

We recommend that you rinse with ACT Fluoride according to the manufacturer instructions immediately before going to bed. Drinking and eating are not recommended for at least thirty (30) minutes after using ACT in order to prevent rinsing away the active fluoride.