



CHRISTEL A. HUMMERT, DMD, Board Certified Orthodontist
NJ Specialty Permit #5563
500 Morris Avenue, Suite 106
Springfield, NJ 07081
973-379-4471
www.GardenStateOrthodontics.com

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS (FIXED BRACES)

CONGRATULATIONS! You are on your way to an even more beautiful smile. Here are a few things for you to review to make orthodontic treatment go smoothly, and to help get through treatment within your estimated treatment time.

YOUR FIRST DAYS IN ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

It takes approximately 24 hours for the glue holding your braces onto your teeth to dry, so be **EXTRA CAREFUL** with them. To avoid breakage and soreness of your teeth, eat only **soft foods** for the first day or two (pasta, scrambled eggs, soup, yogurt, mashed potatoes, ground meat, beans and rice, smoothies, ice cream, etc.). There will be general soreness of your teeth, which can be relieved by rinsing with **warm salt water** (dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water and rinse for 30 seconds several times a day). If the tenderness persists, you can take whatever pain reliever you normally use for a headache (ibuprofen generally works the best). Soreness usually ends by the third day, however, everyone reacts to braces differently, it can last a full week or even longer. The beginning is the most uncomfortable time in braces, so hang in there – it only gets easier!

LOOSENING OF TEETH

It is normal for your teeth to become somewhat loose during orthodontic treatment. This allows us to move your teeth into the correct positions. Once in the correct positions, your teeth will again tighten up. If your teeth didn't get loose at all, we wouldn't be able to move them, so **don't worry**, this is only temporary!

ATHLETICS

If you take part in any sport that requires a mouthguard, or any contact sport at all, please let us know. We **HIGHLY** recommend wearing an athletic mouthguard for any contact sport, even if it is not required by your team. We have special mouthguards for you designed for patients in orthodontic treatment which will allow your teeth to continue to move. In case of any accident involving the face, check your mouth and the appliances immediately. For any severe head, face, or mouth injury, go to the closest emergency room, and contact your family dentist. If teeth are loosened or the appliances damaged, call our office as soon as possible.

EATING WITH BRACES

Eating with braces takes a little adjustment in your normal eating habits. It is important to modify your eating habits so that your orthodontic appliances stay in place. In general, try to eat more slowly and take smaller bites. The best thing to do is to cut everything up, and to chew all of your food on your back teeth. Make sure you **stay away from hard and/or sticky foods** for the entire time you have your braces, and **DO NOT** bite into anything! If you are going to eat an apple, bagel, carrot, pear, etc., make sure you cut or break them into small slices or pieces before eating them to avoid breakage. Chew on your back teeth. **ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NO GUM** – that means even no sugarless gum or Freedent! Also avoid sugary beverages and soda. Please go to the website, www.GardenStateOrthodontics.com, for a more complete list of foods to avoid. And remember, **WHEN IN DOUBT, DON'T EAT IT!**

PREVENTING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR BRACES

In addition to eating the right foods, there are other things to avoid in order to prevent problems with your braces. Biting ice, chewing on pens or pencils, biting your nails, and picking at your braces should all be avoided. Although the glue we use to hold your braces onto your teeth is strong, it is no match for the force of your bite!

BROKEN/LOOSE WIRE OR BRACKETS

If you take care of your appliances and watch what you are eating, your braces and wires should not become loose or break. If they do come loose, do not be alarmed – this is NOT considered an emergency. This happens occasionally. If it is uncomfortable, you may use the wax we provided you or a wet piece of cotton to cover any sharp area and keep you comfortable until we are able to give you an appointment for repair. Please call our office as soon as possible for an appointment. *Even if you have an appointment coming soon, please let us know that you have a broken appliance so that we can add time to your appointment and avoid getting backed-up in our schedule.*

TOOTHBRUSHING AND FLOSSING

Toothbrushing is the patient's most important responsibility while braces are worn. In your home care kit, we provided you with the tools you will need to keep your teeth sparkly clean, and we showed you how to use all of them. If you ever need more supplies or have any questions on how to clean your teeth, please let us know. The tooth surfaces beneath the brackets and the bands are protected, however, the surfaces around the braces, particularly near the gums, are difficult to clean and therefore require special attention. If your gums are red, puffy, and bleed when you brush, you are not cleaning them well enough. Poor oral hygiene can lead to **PERMANENT WHITE SCARS**, called decalcifications, or cavities on your teeth. In order to prevent **permanent** stains, decalcifications and cavities, you must brush thoroughly and carefully after every meal with a **SOFT** toothbrush and fluoridated toothpaste. You must also use your proxabrush and floss at least once a day to clean in between your teeth. We also recommend using a fluoride rinse (like ACT) daily before going to sleep every night. We have also found that patients with braces can benefit from using a **waterpick** daily in conjunction with brushing and flossing. Please visit our website if you need to review the oral hygiene instructions that we went over today when you had your braces placed.

COOPERATION

Success of orthodontic treatment depends heavily on your cooperation. Keep your appointments and come on time – each missed appointment can lengthen treatment time by about a month. Wear the appliances as directed, avoid the foods that can damage your appliances, and handle any broken appliances promptly. Broken appliances can stop or reverse treatment progress. Extensive repairs may require an appointment during school or work hours. Wear your elastics and appliances as instructed – your teeth will not move unless you follow the instructions. Always be conscientious and responsible toward your treatment. Quick, successful results depend on you! It is very important that you keep your teeth, gums, and appliances clean. You can **permanently damage** your teeth if you do not keep them clean. Please keep in mind that excessive breakage of appliances, poor compliance with elastic rubber bands, and poor oral hygiene can all make your treatment take longer than estimated, and may cause permanent damage to your teeth. We may recommend or elect to end treatment early, prior to completion and without refund, if you are not compliant with elastic wear and/or keeping your teeth clean.

CALL THE OFFICE

If you have any problems, you can call the office at any time. We are in the office on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays. We are also in the office one Saturday a month (usually the first Saturday, no Saturdays in July and August). If we are not in the office, please leave a message with your name and phone number on our machine and we will be sure to get back to you as soon as possible. If your problem requires immediate attention and we are not in the office, you may text Dr. Hummert on her cell phone with a picture of the problematic area. Her cell phone number is available on the office answering machine. ***Please reserve this for emergencies only, NOT for scheduling purposes (Dr. H's patient schedule is not on her phone, only on the office computers).*** **Texting a picture of the problem area to Dr. H's cell phone is the best way for Dr. Hummert to advise you on what to do about an emergency.**

VISIT YOUR DENTIST

During your orthodontic treatment, it is important that you continue to see your general dentist regularly for professional cleanings and check ups. Your cleanings and check ups with your general dentist should be **at least** every 3-6 months. Always smile and be proud of your appliances – it shows the world that you take very good care of yourself! **GOOD LUCK!**