

Appliance advice



Fixed brace

Removable brace

Functional appliance

Headgear

Retainers

Why do I need to wear it?

Your brace is designed to move your teeth in a very accurate and controlled way. Your treatment will have been discussed with you, and you should already know why you are wearing a brace. If you do not, please ask your orthodontist again.

Will it hurt?

It is usual that your teeth will ache for the first few days that you wear your brace. As long as you put up with it for a couple of days the aching will reduce until it disappears. You may notice that your teeth are a little tender to bite on, but this will also wear off quickly. If necessary, ask your parents for whatever tablets you would take for a headache. These will usually stop any pain. If you get severe pain, stop wearing the brace and make an urgent appointment to see me. Your cheeks may get a bit sore before they get used to the brace (a bit like the skin on your feet getting sore when you have a new pair of shoes). If this happens, squidge some of the orthodontic wax around whichever part of the metal brace is rubbing. If necessary, suck a Strepisil or Rinsted type sore throat sweet to help the ulcer to heal, or use Bonjela-type teething gel.

What about my speech?

You will find that your speech is slightly different for the first few days after the brace is fitted and you may produce more saliva (dribble) than usual. This will improve very rapidly, but to speed things up, practice reading out loud.

How do I keep it clean?

It is very important that you clean the brace very thoroughly using an orthodontic brush (available at reception) at least twice a day. You should also give it a brush after every meal. This is easiest if you carry a travel toothbrush with you (also

available at reception). If you do not keep the brace spotlessly clean, you may find that when the brace is removed, your teeth will be covered in brown or grey marks which are permanent.

What can I eat?

Your brace will withstand eating many foods as long as you are careful. However, it must be fragile enough to allow removal at the end of treatment without breaking your teeth. You must therefore avoid anything sticky, or crunchy. This includes obvious things like toffee or chewing gum, and less obvious things like crusty bread, or pizza crust. If your brace breaks, your teeth will very rapidly move back where they came from and your treatment will take longer. For this reason, you must check your brace for breakages every day and contact us if you notice anything loose. If you break your brace 3 times without a very good excuse, it will be removed and your treatment abandoned.

What if I get problems?

Problems with fixed braces are rare. However, if anything happens that makes the brace very uncomfortable and cannot be controlled using the remedies suggested above, or you notice that it is broken, please call us and ask for an urgent appointment.

Removable brace advice

Why do I need to wear it?

Your brace is designed to move your teeth, or hold them in their current positions. Your treatment will have been discussed with you, and you should already know why you are wearing a brace. If you do not, please ask your orthodontist again. Few people enjoy wearing braces, but you would not be asked to unless it was important.

Will it hurt?

It is usual that your teeth will ache for the first few days that you wear your brace. As long as you put up with it for a couple of days the aching will reduce until it disappears. You may notice that your teeth are a little tender to bite on first thing in the morning, but this will also wear off quickly. If necessary, ask your parents for whatever tablets you would take for a headache. These will usually stop any pain. If you get severe pain, stop wearing the brace and make an urgent appointment to see me.

What about my speech?

You will find that your speech is a little slurred for the first few days after the brace is fitted and you may produce more saliva (dribble) than usual. This will improve very rapidly, but to speed things up, practice reading out loud.

How long should I wear it for?

Unless your orthodontist has told you differently, your brace should be worn full-time. This includes eating. The reason for this is that teeth want to move back to where they came from much quicker than they will move in the direction we want – whenever your brace is out of your mouth your treatment is going backwards!

It is very easy for an orthodontist to tell whether you have been wearing your brace or not, and if you do not wear it, your treatment will be abandoned and your place given to someone else.

Should I take it out at all?

Your brace should be removed for cleaning. Your teeth and the brace should be cleaned with a toothbrush after every time you eat anything otherwise it will become very dirty and smelly. Do not flick the brace in and out with your tongue – this will cause it to break.

You should also remove your brace when playing rugby or any other sport where you might get a bang in the face. When you do remove your brace for these reasons, it should be stored in a rigid container such as the plastic boxes you can buy from our reception or a Tupperware box or soap dish. If you put it in your pocket or wrap it in tissue it will get lost or broken, and you will have to pay OVER £50 for a replacement (NHS rules).

What if I get problems?

Problems with removable braces are rare. However, if anything happens that makes the brace difficult to wear, please call us and ask for an urgent appointment. Continue to wear the brace unless it is painful, sharp, or falls out of your mouth easily.

Functional brace advice



Why do I need to wear it?

Your brace is very special. It is designed to help your jaws to grow in the correct way. It will also move your teeth. Your treatment will have been discussed with you, and you should already know why you are wearing a brace. If you do not, please ask your orthodontist again. Few people enjoy wearing braces. However, you would not be asked to unless it was important.

Will it hurt?

It is usual that your teeth and your cheeks will ache after the brace is fitted and whenever it is adjusted. As long as you put up with it for a couple of days the aching will reduce until it disappears. You may notice that your teeth are a little tender to bite on sometimes, but this is a sign that they are moving and will also wear off quickly. If necessary, ask your parents for whatever tablets you would take for a headache. These will usually stop any pain. If you get severe pain, stop wearing the brace and make an urgent appointment to see me.

What about my speech?

You will notice that your speech sounds different after your brace is fitted. As long as you wear it for a few days, your speech will return to normal.

How long should I wear it for?

Your brace should be worn full-time, excluding eating. The reason for this is that teeth want to move back to where they came from much quicker than they will move in the direction we want – whenever your brace is out of your mouth your treatment is going backwards!

It is very easy for an orthodontist to tell whether you have been wearing your brace or not, and if you do not wear it, your treatment will be abandoned and your place given to someone else.

Should I take it out at all?

Your brace should be removed for eating and cleaning. Your teeth and the brace should be cleaned with a toothbrush after every time you eat anything otherwise it will become very dirty and smelly. At least twice a day give the brace a good brush with toothpaste.

You should also remove your brace when playing any sport where you might get a bang in the face. When you do remove your brace for these reasons, it should be stored in a rigid container such as a Tupperware box or soap dish. If you put it in your pocket or wrap it in tissue it will get lost or broken, and you may not get another one. If a new one is made, there is usually a fee of £75.

Why do I need to wear it?

Your headgear is designed to move your top back teeth, or hold them in their current positions, depending on the number of hours you have been asked to wear the headgear for. Your treatment will have been discussed with you, and you should already know why it is essential to your treatment. If you do not, please ask your orthodontist again. Few people enjoy wearing headgear, but you would not be asked to unless it was important.

Will it hurt?

It is usual that your teeth will ache for the first few days that you wear headgear. As long as you put up with it for a couple of days the aching will reduce until it disappears. You may notice that your teeth are a little tender to bite on first thing in the morning, but this will also wear off quickly. If necessary, ask your parents for whatever tablets you would take for a headache. These will usually stop any pain. If you get severe pain, stop wearing the headgear and make an urgent appointment to see me.

How many hours should I wear it for?

Your target number of hours is shown on the chart given to you. It is OK to "work up" to this number of hours over a few days. To remind you, you should aim for an average of between 10 and 14 hours every day (your orthodontist will give you full details). It does not matter if some days are a little less, as long as you "catch up" and wear it for more hours on other days. The headgear can only work when it is being worn. When it is not worn, your teeth quickly move back to where they came from. The number of hours you have been asked to wear the headgear have been calculated specially for you - any less and your teeth will not move.

When should I wear it?

At the very least, you should wear your headgear in bed. You may have been told only to do this. For most people the headgear needs to be worn for much longer. You should therefore wear your headgear whenever you are in the house - watching TV, reading, doing homework, or playing computer games can all be done with your headgear on. Some people also wear their headgear outside, but this is not essential. You must not wear your headgear whenever there is a risk of it being pulled from your mouth, for example when playing sports.

What if I wear the headgear for longer than asked?

Well done! Your target number of hours are the minimum you should aim for. If you wear the headgear for longer, the rest of your treatment will be quicker and you can therefore expect to have your brace taken off sooner.

How should I put it on and take it off?

You must only put on and take off the headgear as we have shown you. Most importantly, you must first disconnect the springs from the metal whisker (the part which goes into the tubes on your top back teeth) before taking it out of your mouth.

What if it comes off by itself or is pulled out of my mouth?

This should not happen and can cause injury, so stop wearing it and bring it to us as soon as possible to be checked.

Your retainers are an important part of your treatment. Your teeth will not stay straight without them.

Why do I need to wear them?

Your teeth will have been moved from their original position. Teeth have long memories, and will tend to want to return to that starting position. It takes several months for your teeth to adjust, and during that time it is necessary to hold them still. That is what your retainers are for.

How long do I need to wear them for?

We advise that you wear the retainers for 20 hours or more per day for the first three months after having your brace removed. During this period you can remove them to eat, to play sport, or for the occasional hour or two.

After 3 months, we will see you to check that everything is settling well. It is usual at this time to gradually reduce the number of hours per day until you are wearing the retainers at night only. During this phase, if, when you put the retainer back in, it feels tight, you will know that your teeth are still moving, and you should increase the hours of wear again.

Teeth move throughout your life as your jaw bones change shape. For this reason, if you want to be sure that your teeth stay straight, you need to wear the retainers for 2 or 3 nights a week for several years.

How do I clean them?

Brush the retainers with water only at least 3 times per day. You may also soak them in diluted mouthwash or, better still, "retainerbrite" to "freshen-up" when required. Do not use hot water.

Storage

When you are not wearing your retainers, they should be kept in a rigid container to prevent them being lost or broken. We sell cases made for this purpose.

Safety

Should your retainers start to feel very loose, especially if you find that they fall out at night, please contact the practice and arrange for us to check that their fit is still satisfactory.

The fee for replacement retainers is currently £80.