

# Instructions for orthodontic Patients

## DIET

In general, avoid anything very hard or sticky! These foods may loosen bands or break off brackets from the teeth causing damage and delay in your treatment.

Cut your foods into small pieces and chew slowly and carefully to avoid breaking, bending or loosening your appliances (braces). Almost anything can be eaten as long as it is cut into small pieces and eaten slowly with care.

- **Specifically, avoid eating the following:** Chewing gum, candy, apples, taffy, peanut brittle, caramels, hard candies.
- **Also avoid biting:** Hard cookies, hard rolls, nuts, bones (non veg), ribs, and pizza crust.
- **Don't chew on:** ice, pens or pencils.

There are still many foods you may enjoy, if you are just careful: apples, pears, raw carrots, celery, corn on the cob, crusty bread sandwiches, bagels and meat on a bone can be cut up in small pieces or strips and eaten on your back teeth. Pizza is okay. Just use your knife and fork instead of your front teeth!

## ORAL HYGIENE

Careful tooth brushing is of critical importance.

Braces trap food, bacteria and plaque that can cause tooth decay, gum disease, and leave permanent marks (decalcification), which will never come off the teeth! Brush after every meal and before bedtime.

Pay special attention to the gum line and the area between the braces and gums. Keep your braces and teeth clean!

A fluoride mouth rinse is highly recommended (i.e. Act, Fluoriguard).

## WAX

If the bands scratch your lips, gums, cheeks or tongue, place a small piece of wax over the sharp spot after drying off the area with a tissue.

Usually such irritations disappear after a few days.

You can also use a small piece of wet tissue instead of wax.

## DISCOMFORT

In general, rinsing with warm salt water can relieve soreness of the mouth: (one teaspoon of salt in a half glass of very warm water).

Rinse for 60 seconds, then spit out. Rinse every ten or twenty minutes for best results.

If pain persists, use an over the counter pain reliever or anti-inflammatory such as zinase dp. (Children, please ask your parents first!)

### **CHECK FOR LOOSE BRACES DA ILY**

Loose braces allow decay to proceed under them rapidly. If any braces or wires break or come loose call the office.

Place wax over any sharp areas, and save any loose pieces and bring them in with you. Loose or broken braces prolong treatment.

### **REGULARITY IN KEEPING APPOINTMENTS IS ESSENTIAL**

Failed or broken appointments increase treatment time.