

Eating with Braces

An important part of your orthodontic treatment is following proper eating instructions, which include avoiding certain foods. These foods include:

- 1) Hard 2) Crunchy 3) Sticky

Listed here are examples of the types of food that fall into these categories. Not following proper eating instructions can result in broken orthodontic appliances which will significantly delay successful results of your treatment, put you at a higher risk for gum (periodontal) disease and cavities, and can cause discomfort to the soft tissue inside your mouth, including cheeks and lips.

PLEASE NOTE: The list only provides examples and does not include everything. If you have a question about a food item, please avoid it until you can talk to your orthodontist.

2) Forbidden Crunchy Foods:

- Potato or Corn Chips • Popcorn • Apples
Carrots • Corn on the Cob



* Do not bite into whole fruits and vegetables, such as apples and carrots. Please cut them into small pieces and chew with your back teeth. It is best to steam vegetables to soften them. Remove corn kernels off the cob before eating them.

1) Forbidden Hard Foods:

- Hard Candy • Ice • Jerky
Nuts • Pizza Crust



* Also avoid CHEWING on hard objects, such as PENS and PENCILS.

3) Forbidden Sticky Foods:

- Gum • Taffy • Gummy Bears • Licorice
Chewy Candy • Caramel • Soda



* Avoid sodas and other drinks that contain sugar as they can cause tooth decay.

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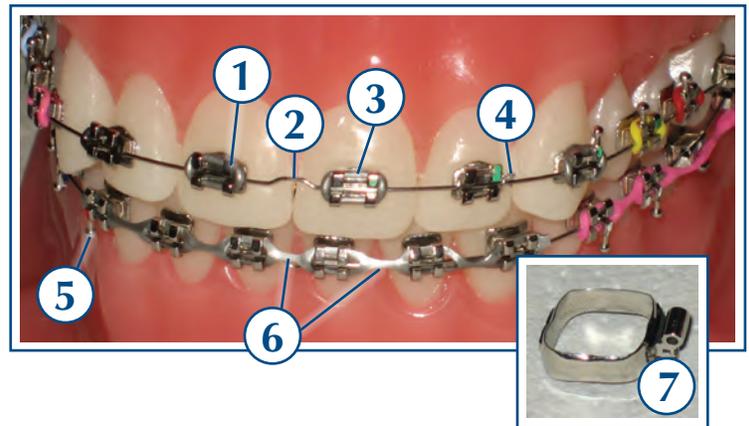
Important Tips for Braces

- 1) An important part of your treatment is to follow eating instructions (see “Eating with Braces”) to prevent damage to your orthodontic appliances. You will add at least 1 additional visit to the office and put yourself at a higher risk for gum (periodontal) disease and cavities. Damaged appliances can also cause additional discomfort to the soft tissue in your mouth.
- 2) Wear a mouth guard designed for braces while playing contact sports. Failure to wear a mouth guard can result in damage to appliances. Mouth guards not designed for braces can also cause damage or prevent teeth from shifting.
- 3) Call the office if you damage your brackets and/or appliances.
- 4) Brush your teeth after EVERY MEAL and floss at least once a day. Not doing so will put you at higher risk for gum (periodontal) disease, cavities, and permanent white spots on your teeth. For tips, please see our handout “Tips on Cleaning & Brushing with Braces.”
- 5) Visit your general dentist for regular cleanings at least once every 6 months.
- 6) If your treatment requires elastics (rubber bands) and/or other appliances, please follow directions for usage. Failure to do so can result in delay of the completion of your treatment significantly.
- 7) After treatment, wear your retainer. It is an important part of orthodontic treatment and failure to follow the instructions provided with your retainer will result in your teeth and bite shifting back.
- 8) Solutions to some emergencies can be found on our “Handling Orthodontic Emergencies” handout. For questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to call the office.
- 9) Have fun! Your braces are a reminder that in a short time you’ll have the beautiful smile you’ve been waiting for. If you follow the above tips, you’ll have a healthy bite and smile that you’re ready to show off to everyone!

Parts of Your Braces

Please use the chart on the right to identify and clearly communicate any problems you may have with your orthodontic appliances when you call the office.

- 1) **Bracket:** The actual “brace” that is bonded/glued to the tooth and holds the wire.
- 2) **Archwire:** The wire that connects and fits into the brackets.
- 3) **Elastic Ligature:** Colored ring that holds the archwire into the bracket.
- 4) **Steel Ligature Tie:** Very small wire that holds the archwire into the bracket.
- 5) **Hook:** Very small arms attached to some brackets that are used to attach rubber bands/elastics.
- 6) **Power Chain:** Several elastic ligatures linked/connected together.
- 7) **Band:** Metal ring around some back teeth.



*** ALL HANDOUTS ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR DOWNLOAD.**

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