



FirstBite
DENTAL

309 Keilor Road, North Essendon, Victoria 3041

Oral Care: Braces

Wearing braces requires patience and discipline. Often, the result of treatment can be more than just a healthy smile, as your orthodontist is also preventing bigger problems from developing later.

Proper oral care at home is important because it will help keep your treatment time on course and might even help reduce it. Furthermore, it will contribute to the long-term health of your teeth and gums.

And your reward? A lifetime of healthy, beautiful smiles! Just follow these tips:

1. Extra time is needed to clean and brush your teeth properly.

This is important as braces can act as a "plaque trap," increasing the amount of plaque in your mouth, which in turn can lead to an increased risk of cavities and gum disease. Good oral hygiene will prevent dental caries appearing whilst wearing braces.

How do I clean all areas of my mouth while wearing braces?

At first, doing a good job removing plaque from your teeth and along the gum line may seem difficult with braces. But keep at it: with a bit of practice, it will get easier! Following these tips can also help:

- First, take off any elastic bands and removable parts (like headgear).
- One recommended brushing method is to place your brush at a 45 degree angle to the gum. Apply gentle pressure as you brush with a short back-and-forth motion, cleaning each tooth individually for about 10 seconds.
- Use the same brushing motion on all inner and outer tooth surfaces.
- Don't forget to brush the chewing surfaces of your teeth - and make sure you reach the teeth in the back, too.
- Finish by cleaning around your braces, brushing first from the top and then from the bottom. Brush gently and take care not to break or bend any of the brackets or wires.

How do I floss with fixed braces?

Flossing removes the plaque between your teeth and under your gum line-areas beyond the reach of your toothbrush. In fact, if you don't floss, you're leaving up to 40% of your tooth surfaces untouched and uncleaned.

Choose a "threading floss" with a stiffened end that threads it through the gap between each tooth - above the wire for your upper teeth and below the wire for your lower teeth.

Curve the floss around each tooth in a "C" shape and gently move it up and down the side of each tooth, including under the gum line. Unroll a new section of floss as you move from tooth to tooth.

After you take the appliance out of your mouth, brush and clean between your teeth in the normal way. Then, using your toothbrush and toothpaste, clean your appliance, rinsing thoroughly with water afterwards.

Also, make sure that you gently brush the gum areas that are covered by your appliance. This includes the roof of your mouth if you wear the appliance on your top teeth.

2. Change in diet

This is necessary as careless eating may break wires or loosen brackets, which in repairing will prolong your treatment.

- Do not chew gum with the braces
- Avoid soft drinks
- Apples and hard pieces of fruit must be cut into smaller pieces
- Keep sweets to a minimum - if eaten, try to eat all at once rather than every hour
- No toffees or similar foods.

N.B. Keep any bracket which has loosened and bring with you to your next appointment.

3. Change in lifestyle

Your daily routine will also be affected by:

- Monthly visits to the dentist to have the braces tightened and checked
- A mouthguard should be worn if playing sports
- Carry a toothbrush with you as often as possible.

Which products are best for braces?

Orthodontic toothbrushes have bristles trimmed in a 'V' shape for cleaning above and below the brackets and wire.

Power toothbrushes can remove more plaque than ordinary manual toothbrushes. And some of the newer ones have brush heads specifically made for use with braces. **Interdental brushes** have very small heads with fine bristles, perfect for cleaning under wires and between teeth. .

Do I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. Your First Bite dentist and Hygienists will work with you to help you do the best job possible in caring for your teeth and gums.