



## Caring for Your Braces

### **Oral Care and 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 problems from developing later.

Proper oral care at home is important because it will help minimize your treatment duration. Furthermore, it will contribute to the long-term health of your teeth and gums. As long as you follow our instructions to keep your braces clean, you are at no greater risk for developing gum disease and cavities compared to those without braces.

And your reward? A lifetime of healthy, straight, beautiful smiles! Just follow these **tips** for **brushing** and **flossing**:

#### **Brushing with Braces:**

- 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.

#### **Flossing with Braces:**

- Flossing removes the plaque between your teeth and under your gum areas beyond the reach of your toothbrush.
- The easiest way to “Floss” is to use the Waterpik Water Flosser to irrigate your teeth and gums. Check out Target, Costco, or Amazon for this product.
- Alternatively, 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.

**Finally, rinse with a fluoridated rinse every night such as Alcohol-Free ACT.** This product can be found at most pharmacies.