

ORAL HYGIENE INSTRUCTIONS

One of the common fears about orthodontics is that the braces may cause decay or permanent scarring/staining of the teeth. Your appliances will cover and protect that portion of your teeth as long as they are firmly attached. The orthodontic appliances make your teeth harder to clean since they stand out from the outside of the teeth and thus make it harder for your toothbrush to clean the spaces between your gums and the attachments. If you fail to get the teeth clean and to exercise your gums, then the gums swell and make it even more difficult to clean. Continued neglect of these areas will result in decay. So when and how should you clean your teeth during orthodontic treatment?

WHEN?

Within 5 minutes after eating. When you are away from home, carry a travel type toothbrush – leave a toothbrush at school or work.

HOW?

1. First, move the brush back and forth across between the wires and gums in the upper and lower arches to loosen the food particles. This is the most important yet missed area to keep clean.
2. Next, brush the following correct way as if you had no braces on.
 - A) Start on the outside of the uppers with bristles at 45 degree angle toward the gum. Scrub with a circular motion, two or three teeth at a time, using 10 strokes then move on.
 - B) The same on the inner surfaces of the uppers.
 - C) Scrub the chewing surfaces last.
 - D) Start on the outside of the lower teeth and repeat this process. Remember, direct the brush at an angle toward the gum or shelf area.
3. Use floss at least one/day. Adjunctive aids such as a proxybrush may be useful.
4. Rinse your mouth and toothbrush. **LOOK IN THE MIRROR** to see if you have missed any places. The teeth and braces should be free of all food particles and plaque. If not, you need to spend more time brushing and/or change the way you are brushing.

REMEMBER

It is much harder to brush with braces. You need to spend more time. Start a good habit and keep your teeth and gums in good shape. Plaque or food left on your teeth and braces will look awfully bad to your friends- give them a break! We want you to have a beautiful smile and clean, sweet breath!!