

Specialist Primary Care Orthodontic Service

FUNCTIONAL APPLIANCES

WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL APPLIANCE?

A functional appliance is made up of two removable braces, which work on the upper and lower teeth at the same time. The lower jaw should be postured forwards and closed so that the bite blocks engage.

WHEN DO I HAVE TO WEAR THE BRACE?

The braces must be worn **all day and all night** - with good wear the improvement in the position of your teeth can be quite dramatic. They must only be taken out for eating, brushing your teeth and for sport (including swimming).

If there is a screw in the middle of the upper brace, this should only be turned as instructed by your orthodontist (usually once a week).

HOW LONG DOES TREATMENT WITH THIS BRACE TAKE?

This will vary depending on how severe your case is. Usually the work of the brace is completed in about 6-9 months – you may then have to wear the brace just at night before progressing to the fixed “train-track” type of brace.

Failing appointments, repeated breakages and poor wear will add to the overall treatment time.

HOW WILL MY BRACES AFFECT ME?

Initially your jaws will ache for a few days and this is normal. Painkillers such as the ones you would normally take for a headache may help.

Your speech will be different at first so practice reading out loud at home on your own, it will soon return to normal within a couple of days.

You may also find yourself swallowing a lot to begin with; this is also quite normal and will quickly pass.

HOW SHOULD I LOOK AFTER MY BRACE?

If the brace is out of the mouth for eating or sport it must be kept in a brace box to avoid damage. Do not click the braces in and out with your tongue as this will break the wires and increase the length of time the treatment will take. These braces are **expensive** - **if you lose or break your brace you may incur a charge.**

Remove the brace for brushing your teeth and clean it gently with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Take care not to drop the brace in the sink as it will shatter!

An orthodontic mouth guard should be worn for contact sports. It is important to continue to see your regular dentist for check-ups. Talk to us if you need advice.

Please inform us as soon as possible if the brace breaks as this may slow treatment and may result in damage to your teeth. Repeatedly breaking your brace or poor wear may result in your treatment being stopped. Telephone: 0208 934 6405 and select option 1 or 2