

Specialist Primary Care Orthodontic Service – Information for patients

Fixed Appliances Information

What is a fixed appliance?

Fixed braces are made up of brackets and bands that are temporarily stuck onto each tooth. A flexible wire joins the brackets in each arch and allows the teeth to be moved into the correct position.

Fixed appliances **should not** be removed by you. Trying to remove them may damage your teeth and gums.

Will it be painful?

The brace may feel rough to the inside of your lips and cheeks for the first week. We provide soft wax and this can ease the initial discomfort. The teeth are likely to be sore for the first few days due to the pressure put onto them by the brace. This is also the case after each adjustment. Painkillers, such as the ones you would normally take for a headache, may help.

Will I be able to speak normally?

Lisping may be a problem at first but most people soon adapt and begin to speak clearly within a few days.

How long will I have to wear my brace?

The length of treatment varies according to the severity of your case. Fixed braces are generally required for about 12-24 months. However, failed and cancelled appointments or repeated breakages of the brace, will add to the overall time.

What can I eat with fixed braces on?

For the first few days it is best to keep to soft foods in order to prevent damage to your teeth and brace. You should avoid for the period of your treatment:

- Sticky, chewy foods such as toffees, boiled sweets, chewing gum, chewy chocolate bars.
- Hard foods, which might damage the brace, such as carrots, tough meats, hard pizza bases, and crusty bread. Try cutting up food into small pieces and chewing on your back teeth.

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- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy water) and excessive amounts of fresh fruit juices. These can cause decay and dental erosion. Milk, water, and diluted squash are the safest drinks.
- Nail biting and pen chewing as this can damage the brace.

What about brushing my teeth?

The teeth, gums, and braces **must** be kept completely clean. It is important that you brush your teeth thoroughly at least twice a day. Ideally take a spare brush to school/work to brush after lunch. If the teeth are not kept clean then permanent staining can result. This is the first indication of tooth decay and the braces will be taken off before the end of treatment to minimise any damage

Cleaning Essentials – What do I need?

Pay particular attention to brushing where the gums and teeth meet. Try and have an ordered sequence of brushing, so you don't forget to brush the front, back, and biting surfaces of the teeth. It is time consuming but essential.

1. Inter-dental brush

The inter-dental brush helps clean in between the brackets and around them.

2. Fluoride mouthwash

A daily fluoride mouthwash is advisable as this can help prevent decay and decalcification. Your orthodontist will advise you.

How often do I need to see my Orthodontist?

You will need to be seen about every 8 weeks for the brace to be adjusted.

Do I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes - you must continue regular check-ups with your dentist so your teeth can be checked for decay.

Can I still wear a mouthguard for sports?

Yes but it will have to be a special orthodontic one to fit over your fixed brace. Ask your orthodontist. Mouthguards should be worn for sports such as rugby, hockey and football.

At the end of treatment a dentist-made custom fit mouthguard is recommended.

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Can I still play a musical instrument?

If you play a wind instrument, particularly the flute or a brass instrument, this can be difficult at first with a fixed brace. However, most patients get used to it with practice.

What if my brace Breaks?

Please contact the department and arrange to be seen on one of our emergency clinics.

Telephone: 0208 934 6300 or 020 8934 2347

Breakages can slow your treatment or may result in damage to your teeth.

What happens at the end when my braces finally come off?

When the fixed braces are taken off, impressions of teeth are taken and retainers are made. Retainer braces are usually removable and hold your teeth in the straightened position. These are worn full time initially, then just at night. Your orthodontist will advise you. If you don't wear your retainers as instructed your teeth will start moving back towards where they started!

