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Dear

Now that you have decided to have orthodontic treatment, you are on the way to improving the occlusion (bite) and the appearance of your teeth.

As orthodontic treatment requires you to wear various appliances on your teeth, there are certain responsibilities that you must undertake to ensure that your mouth is kept in excellent health and your appliances are not damaged.

These are:

1. **Maintenance of excellent oral hygiene - through regular tooth brushing.**
2. **Following some restrictions in your diet.**
3. **Wearing elastics and "plates" as required.**

If these instructions are followed, then your treatment will be successful and not prolonged unnecessarily.

RECOGNISING YOUR ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCES

To enable you to know when there are problems with your appliances you must be able to recognise different attachments in your mouth. We suggest you explore your mouth, so that you can recognise the **TUBES** on your molar teeth, which teeth have **BRACKETS** glued to them and recognise the **ARCHWIRE** running through all of these attachments. The archwire is attached to your brackets with small **Modules** and sometimes, thin wire called **Ligatures**. Occasionally **Elastic Ligatures** may be used as well.

By checking regularly when you brush your teeth, you will be able to recognise problems early, and therefore arrange to have them repaired as soon as possible.

TOOTH BRUSHING

Your aim when brushing your teeth is to remove *all plaque and food debris* from your teeth and appliances.

PLAQUE is a thin film of bacteria (germs) and food which accumulates on the teeth. Bacteria make acids from the sugars you eat and these acids attack tooth enamel and cause tooth decay. Tooth decay presents initially as white spots on the teeth and eventually cavities which are irreversible. **Please note that braces do not cause tooth decay, bad oral hygiene does!! Despite good brushing, a diet high in sugar will cause tooth decay!**

The bacteria also have the ability to produce toxins (poisons) and when left on the teeth the plaque will cause swollen, puffy gums. This condition is called **gingivitis** or gum disease, and will occur if you do not brush your teeth properly.

To brush successfully you must have:

- a) **SMALL SOFT TOOTHBRUSH:**
To allow access to difficult areas without damaging gum margins. Brushes will need changing frequently as they tend to wear out more readily when you have braces on your teeth.
- b) **MIRROR:**
You must check in the mirror that your teeth and gums look clean and that your braces are shiny.
- c) **FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE:**
The fluoride in toothpaste helps to keep the tooth enamel strong and more resistant to decay.

Use an egg timer to make sure you spend the required time of 3-5 minutes needed to brush your teeth properly. **Disclosing tablets** should be used regularly to check how effectively you are removing plaque.

Other Tooth Brushing Aids which may be prescribed to you include **Tooth Moose** to strengthen your teeth and reverse the initial signs of tooth decay and **Perioguard Gel** to help improve the health of your gums if you are suffering from gingivitis.

TOOTH BRUSHING CONTINUED

Orthodontic bands, brackets and wires make cleaning more difficult than normal, so you will be shown a special brushing technique at your banding appointment. This technique will ensure that you remove plaque and food debris from around the gum margins, between the teeth and from around your appliances.

SO LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY WHEN IT IS BEING DEMONSTRATED TO YOU

It is important to use a planned sequence of brushing. Clean the lower teeth first, then the upper teeth, taking care that no teeth are missed. Brush the top teeth separately from the lower teeth

Be sure to brush all surfaces of your teeth ie:

- the outside (near your cheek)
- the inside (next to the tongue)
- and the biting surface.

Special attention must be taken in areas where:

- teeth have been removed.
- a tooth is out of alignment.
- where springs are attached.

Brushing must be done in the mornings and the evenings. If possible brush after the midday meal as well. We suggest that you take a toothbrush to work or school, and brush with a wet brush, after eating your lunch. To brush thoroughly you will need to take 3 to 5 minutes so you may need to adjust your routine particularly in the mornings, to allow extra time to brush. **Your appliances will "sparkle" if they are brushed correctly.**

REMEMBER: You must continue to visit your general dentist every 6 months for your regular check-up and clean visits.

Orthodontists are only responsible for straightening your teeth.

As we are conscious of your general health and well being it is important that you let staff know of any changes to your medical history that may arise during treatment. We please ask you to inform us in regards to any medications being taken as some medications can affect saliva flow and dental health.

DIET

Regular eating of **SUGARY FOODS (AND DRINKS)** will cause decay, which will make it necessary to stop orthodontic treatment while the tooth is repaired. Sugary foods can also cause white marks on the tooth surfaces. These marks, which are permanent, will become obvious when your appliances are removed. They are called decalcification spots, and indicate that the tooth enamel has been weakened by acid attack. We suggest that your diet consist mainly of savoury foods, ie fruit, sandwiches, cold meats, etc.

Sweet desserts, cakes and buns should be eaten only at meal times, limiting them to one meal a day. **Avoid all fizzy soft drinks, sports drinks and fruit drinks.** These are very high in sugar or very acidic which will increase the risk of tooth decay. Drink water or flavoured milk drinks instead.

Certain types of food will damage orthodontic appliances. **HARD, STICKY FOODS** will bend archwires and break brackets off the teeth. Care must be taken when eating fruits and raw vegetables such as apples, celery and carrot. These must be sliced, cut into small pieces or grated and eaten on your back teeth instead of biting them off with your front teeth. With stone fruit, remove the stone before eating. Grilled meats and steaks must be cut into small pieces off the bone. Do not chew on bones. Only eat the meat that can be removed with a knife and fork.

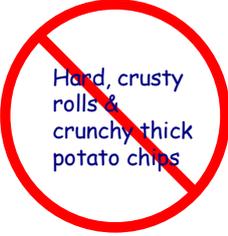
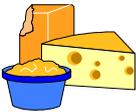
Chewing on pencils and rulers must be avoided.

Most breakages are caused by careless eating habits.

Re-occurrence of breakages will prolong treatment, so a little care with what you eat will ensure that your treatment is successful and relatively hassle free.

Should any of your appliances become damaged or broken, please contact us to make an appointment as soon as possible to have it repaired. Please contact us also, if a breakage occurs on the day of your appointment as extra time will need to be scheduled to fix the breakage.

DIET (CONTINUED)

	Sweet Foods to Avoid	Hard Foods to Avoid	Suggested Alternatives
Breakfast 	 <p>Sugary Cereal ie: Coco-Pops, Fruit Loops, jams, honey on toast.</p>	 <p>Hard cereal ie: Muesli & Nutri-Grain, etc. Toast & hard crusty bread, bacon rind.</p>	Any other cereals, low in sugar ie: Puffed Wheat, Cornflakes. Sliced bread, vegemite, peanut butter, bananas, eggs & cut the rind off bacon.
Lunch 	 <p>Cakes, buns, slices, sugary muesli bars. Soft Drinks</p>	 <p>Hard, crusty rolls & crunchy thick potato chips</p>	Sandwiches/normal bread, pies, pasties & sausage rolls, soft hamburgers, bite size pieces of fruit and vegetables (raw).
Dinner 		 <p>Chewing on bones, corn on the cob.</p>	Cut meat off with a knife, canned corn, cut everything into bite size pieces.
In Between Meals 	 <p>Sweet Biscuits, chocolate, lollies. Cough drops</p>	 <p>Nuts, twisties, ice blocks.</p>	Dry biscuits and cheese, cold meats: mettwurst, cabana. Bite size pieces of fruit or vegetables. Ice cream in soft cones, sultanas, thin potato chips.
Drinks 	 <p>Soft drinks and cordial. Excessive amounts of fruit juice.</p>		Artificially sweetened soft drinks and cordials. Mineral water and Water.

ELASTICS

Your elastics apply a constant force for your teeth to move. Failure to wear your elastics all the time as directed by the orthodontist, will prolong treatment time and may effect the final result.

Elastics are worn in varying positions, depending on the direction of movement required for your teeth. Therefore, we will explain to you at your banding, or later appointments how and where your elastics are to be worn.

The only time your elastics are removed, is when you clean your teeth. You then put your elastics on the end of your finger to remind you to put them straight back on again, *immediately* after cleaning. You will find that the elastics tend to break at odd times, so you will need to carry spare elastics wherever you go. To ensure you do not run out of elastics between appointments, replenish your supplies each visit from the front desk. Should you start to run low on elastics between visits, ring the practice. We are happy to post elastics to you.

The different strengths of elastics are indicated by varying coloured packets. Occasionally, the orthodontist may change the colour and also the position of your elastics, *so listen carefully* when it is being explained. If you are not sure, please ask. Unless instructed otherwise, your *elastics must be changed every second day*.

RETAINERS

Once your bands have been removed, it is **extremely** important that retainers (plates) be worn. This is to prevent your teeth from returning to their original positions. It is important that the retainer is worn as directed. If it becomes lost or broken, please contact us as soon as possible as, without it, your teeth will move and may become crooked again.

As your orthodontist is concerned mainly with the movement of your teeth, it is necessary that your teeth are checked by your family dentist or school dentist every six months during orthodontic management. If there is any further information or assistance that you may need from time to time, please feel free to ask the orthodontist or the staff, as we are here to help you.