

## *Here's how to take care of your braces:*

### **Hints**

Now that you have started orthodontic treatment, here are a few hints to help get you through the first several days with minimum of discomfort.

### **General Soreness**

There might be a general soreness in the mouth. This can be relieved by rinsing the mouth with a warm salt-water mouthwash. Dissolve one teaspoonful of salt in 8 ounces of warm water, and rinse your mouth vigorously. If the tenderness is severe, take Tylenol, Advil or whatever you normally take for headache or similar pain. Soreness should end by the third or fourth day.

### **Loosening of Teeth**

This is to be expected throughout treatment. It is normal so don't be upset. The teeth will again become rigidly fixed in their new positions. Teeth must loosen first so they can be moved.

### **Brushing**

Brush two, preferably three, times a day for a minimum of four minutes each time. Pay special attention to the "danger zone" between the gum and the braces. This is the most difficult area to keep clean. Every night after you brush, before you go to sleep, rinse with fluoridated mouth wash (either ACT or Fluoroguard). We may also give you a prescription for Prevident. Only use either the mouthwash or Prevident, do not use them together. Rinsing or brushing with fluoride reduces the possibility of getting a cavity by 80%.

### **Eating**

Be careful to protect the orthodontic appliances when you eat. Faithfully follow our instructions on foods to avoid. For the first day or so, soft foods will be more appropriate. Avoid tough meats, hard breads, and raw vegetables plus the foods on the food list.

### **Athletics**

If you take part in athletics, it's important that you consult us for special precautions. Everyone who plays contact sports should wear a mouthguard. In case of any accident involving the face, check your mouth and the appliance immediately. If teeth are loosened or the appliances damaged, phone at once for an appointment. In the meantime, treat your discomfort as you would treat any general soreness.

### **Loose Wire or Band**

If a wire or band comes loose, don't be alarmed. This happens occasionally. If a wire protrudes and is irritating, use a blunt instrument (back of spoon or the eraser end of a pencil) and carefully, gently push the irritating wire back in place. Simply, get it out of the way. If irritation to the lips or mouth continues, place wax or wet cotton on the wire to reduce the annoyance. Telephone our office as soon as possible for an appointment to check and repair the appliances. If any piece comes off, save it and bring it with you to the office.

### **Emergency Appointment**

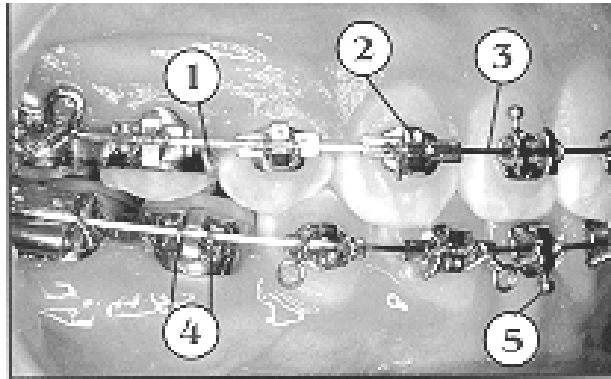
As a general rule, an emergency appointment may be made when there is severe discomfort, a loose band, a broken wire or something sticking out that you can't take care of. Please call us if the office is closed and you are in discomfort. Instructions are on the answering machine.

### **Cooperation**

Success of treatment depends upon cooperation between you and the doctor and staff. Wear the appliances as directed, avoid the foods that can be damaging and handle emergencies promptly. Always be conscientious and responsible toward your treatment. Quick, successful results depend on you, too. It's very important that you keep your teeth, gums and appliances clean. At least once each day, spend a few moments with a mirror checking the appliances to make sure they are thoroughly clean and in good shape.

*Always smile and be proud of your appliances. After all, it shows the world that you take very good care of yourself.*

## *Parts of your braces*



1. Band - ring of metal that was placed around the tooth
2. Bracket - attachment glued directly to the front of the tooth
3. Archwire - large wire that fits into the bracket slots and is used to move the teeth
4. Ligature - tiny wire or plastic module (often brightly colored) that attaches the archwire to the bracket
5. Hooks - used to attach elastics (rubber bands)

Remember to bring all removable biteplates, headgears, retainers, etc. to EVERY appointment.

If your band comes loose or brackets come unglued, call the office BEFORE your appointment so we can be prepared to repair the broken part. If we are not informed, we may not be able to fix it until your following appointment.