

## **CARE OF FIXED APPLIANCES**

Now that you have a fixed brace you may have some questions that you would like answered.

### **Will it be painful?**

It is likely to be sore for about 3-5 days each time the brace is adjusted. If necessary ask your parents for some painkillers such as the ones you would normally take for a headache (please read the instructions on the packet). If the brace rubs your lips or cheeks, you will be given some wax to help with this. Pinch off a pea sized piece of wax, roll it into a ball and push it over the metal part of the brace. This should stop the brace rubbing until you get used to it.

### **Can I remove the brace?**

The brace you are now wearing is fixed to the teeth for the whole of your treatment. You should not try to remove it, as you may damage your teeth and the treatment will not work.

### **Can I eat normally?**

For your orthodontic treatment to work well and in the shortest possible time it is important you take care of your teeth and brace. In order to prevent damage to both, you should:

- Avoid eating sweets, toffees, chewing gum, chocolate bars, etc.
- Avoid drinking fizzy drinks (including diet drinks) and excessive amounts of fruit juice.
- Take care eating any hard foods which may damage the brace such as crunchy apples, crusty bread, etc. Cut them up first.

Other than this you should be able to eat normally.

### **What about tooth brushing?**

It is important you brush your teeth well, three times every day and use fluoride toothpaste. If possible take a toothbrush to school with you to clean your teeth after lunch. Pay particular attention to brush where the gums meet the teeth. Brushing may take a little longer when you have a fixed brace. A daily fluoride mouth rinse should also be used last thing at night, after tooth brushing. Failure to keep your teeth and brace clean may lead to permanent marks on your teeth.

Please remember to take a toothbrush to school with you on the day that you have your orthodontic appointment so that you can clean your teeth before you see your orthodontist.

**How long will treatment take?**

Treatment usually takes 12-24 months but this will vary according to how complicated your case is. Failed and cancelled appointments or repeated breakages of the brace will add to the overall treatment time.

**Will I need to wear anything in addition to the fixed brace?**

At some stage of your treatment it may be necessary for you to wear headgear and/or elastics. Elastics are worn inside the mouth at all times including mealtimes. Headgear is usually worn in the evening and night only. [See separate instruction sheet on "Headgear"]

**Will I need to wear another brace once my treatment has finished?**

Once the active phase of your treatment has been finished, it will be necessary to wear a retaining brace. This may be removable or it may be fixed behind your front teeth. The length of time this has to be worn varies. You will be given more information about this by your orthodontist.

**How often will I need an appointment?**

You will need regular appointments during treatment for the brace to be adjusted.

**Do I still need to see my regular dentist?**

Yes, Even though you are wearing braces, your usual family dentist will need to check your teeth regularly for decay.

**What do I do if I play contact sports?**

It is recommended that you wear a gum shield for contact sports as well as for riding a bicycle, roller-skating, or skateboarding.

**What if I play a musical instrument?**

If you play a wind instrument, particularly the flute or a brass instrument, then a fixed brace may make this more difficult. Please discuss this with your music teacher before you start any orthodontic treatment. [See separate instruction sheet "Advice for Musicians"]

**What do I do if my brace breaks?**

Ring up for an appointment as soon as is reasonably possible. Do not wait for your next booked appointment as the breakage may slow your treatment, or may result in damage to your teeth. If you repeatedly break your brace treatment may be stopped.