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### Starting Orthodontic Treatment:

At first you may notice general tenderness/ soreness - it will not last forever! It is common for your lips, cheeks, and tongue to become irritated for one to two weeks as they toughen and get used to the braces.

- Eat softer foods for a few days
- Cold foods such as Jell-O and yogurt help discomfort
- Warm saltwater rinses 1-2 times daily
- OTC Tylenol (acetaminophen) as needed
- Wax in areas that are poking/ uncomfortable

**Please see our website for any additional guidance as you are adapting to life with braces! – [www.lenhartorthodontics.com](http://www.lenhartorthodontics.com)**

### Brushing Your Teeth with Braces:

- It is very important to brush after every meal and every snack to ensure your teeth and gums stay healthy throughout orthodontic treatment. Failure to brush thoroughly can result in scars on your teeth.



- We ask that you use fluoride toothpaste with a soft bristled toothbrush, or an electric toothbrush. We will give you a prescription for higher strength toothpaste to use before bed. This can be filled at a local pharmacy.
- If you are having trouble brushing, or not quite getting everywhere with your toothbrush, you can try our Plaque HD toothpaste that helps you see the areas that you are missing while brushing. It can be purchased from our office at a discounted rate.



- Brush the outside and inside surfaces of your teeth using small, circular motions while positioning the head of the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gum line. Brush your teeth's chewing surfaces and the inside surface of your front teeth using short, gentle, back-and-forth motions. Please see our website for a video and additional instructions.
- Pay close attention to the areas around your brackets or other appliances.

### **Flossing Your Teeth with Braces:**

- Flossing daily will help keep your teeth, gums, and braces clean, which will keep your treatment time on track.
- Floss threaders, Oral-B Super Floss, WaterPik, and Platypus Flossers can be very helpful.
- **Please see the instruction video on our website for video instructions and more information.**

### **Eating with Braces/Foods to Avoid:**

- **Avoid any chewing gum (other than Ice Breakers Ice Cubes)**
- **Avoid sticky, gooey, or gummy foods**
  - Caramels, Skittles, Tootsie Rolls, Jelly beans, licorice, fruit candy, gummy bears
- **Avoid hard or crunchy foods**
  - Hard candy, jaw breakers, nuts, peanut brittle, Jolly Ranchers, refrigerated or frozen candy bars, Hard breads or pizza crust, an ice
- **Avoid pop, sports drinks, and other acidic drinks.**
- **Please do not eat or suck on lemon wedges! They are very acidic and can damage your teeth.**
  - Soft bagels, French bread, Hard taco shells, tortilla chips, soft chewy pizza crust, and popcorn (no un-popped kernels)
- **Crunchy fruits and vegetables, like apples and carrots, need to cut up into thin slices**
- **Foods that may be eaten with no problem:**
  - potato chips, soft taco shells, soft fruit, cooked vegetables, room-temperature chocolate, corn (cut off the cobb)

- Foods high in sugar and sugary drinks (including pop, sports drinks, and fruit juices) can cause tooth decay (cavities) and decalcification (permanent white spots on the teeth). If you do eat sweets brush immediately after eating. If you cannot brush right away, rinse with water and then brush as soon as possible.
- Hard and sticky foods can break brackets and bend arch wires. Broken/ loose brackets can make your time in braces longer. If wires are bent, they can move teeth in the wrong direction!
- Please use sound judgement as to the foods you should eat or avoid. If you have any questions please ask a staff member.

### Gum:

- If you like chewing gum Dr. Lenhart and Dr. Sherman ONLY recommend Ice Breakers, Ice Cube gum. This can be found at many grocery stores or retail outlets.
- This gum is sweetened with xylitol. Xylitol is a natural sweetener that has been proven to inhibit tooth decay.
- **Xylitol is toxic to pets**, so please keep this gum out of their reach!



### Mouth Guard:

- When you are participating in sports while in orthodontic treatment, it is important to wear a mouth guard.
- We offer a traditional mouth guard option at no charge, as well as SISU mouth guards for \$30. Please let us know if you need one.
- If our stock options do not suit you, we also recommend Shock Doctor (Braces), and Under Armour (Braces). These can be purchased online.

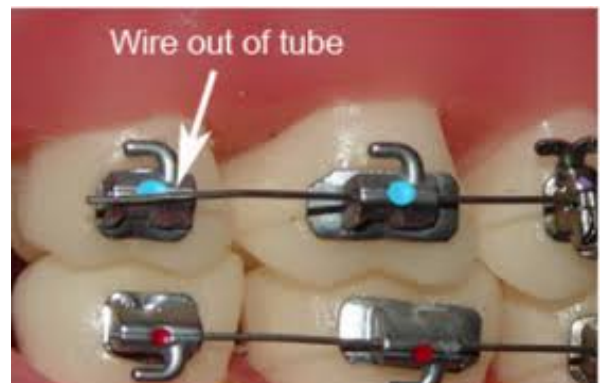
- If you have any questions about mouth guards please give us a call.

### **Rubber Bands (Elastics):**

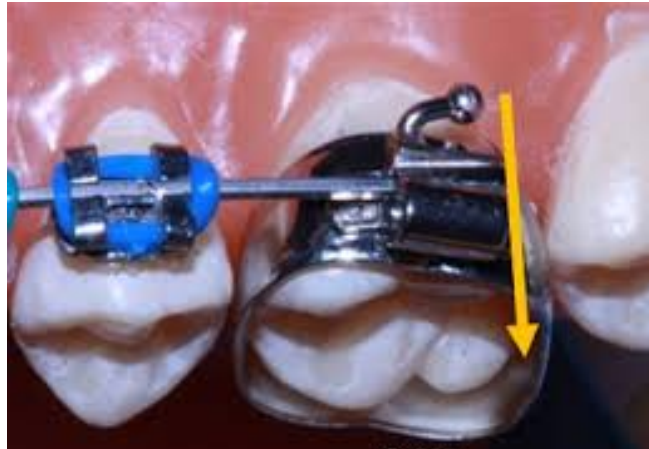
- Rubber bands are a great tool to correct the bite and make your smile look amazing! Please wear as directed! In order for rubber bands to be effective they must be worn as prescribed, which is often for 22+ hours per day!
- Change elastics every 3-4 hours so they do not wear out.
- If you are asked to wear your rubber bands “Full Time,” that means that we are actively trying to move teeth. If you do not wear them 22+ hours per day then the teeth will not move correctly.
  - Try to keep them in all the time (even when eating)! If you cannot tolerate eating with them, please be sure to replace them right after eating.
- If you are asked to wear them “at night” then we are trying to hold the teeth where they are and maintain any correction. Please wear elastics each night when you go to bed.
- Failure to wear rubber bands as directed can result in much longer time in treatment and/ or an additional fee for a fixed appliance.

### **Things to Watch Out For (Non-Emergencies):**

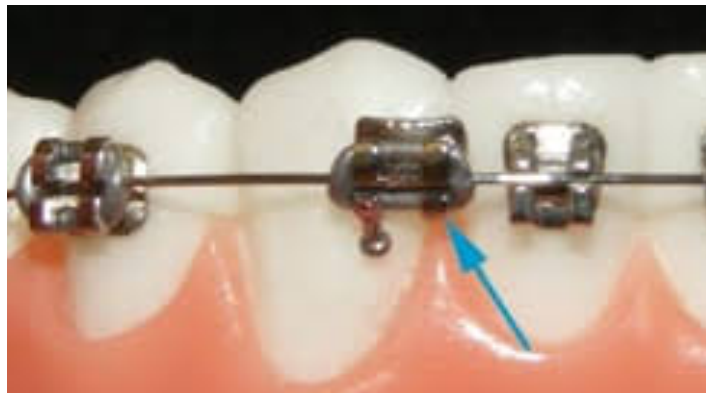
- **Loose wires** - try to place wire back into the slot or tube where it was before, or if you are unsuccessful you can cut/ clip thin wires where it is loose (if it's causing pain/discomfort), or call the office during working hours to have it repaired.



- **Loose Bands** - Try to push the band back up around the tooth near the gum, try not to eat anything on that side, and call the office during working hours to have us remove or replace it.



- **Brackets** - Place wax over the loose bracket if it is causing discomfort. Call the office to inform us of the loose bracket so we can get it repaired during working hours.
  - Each appointment with at least one broken bracket adds about 1 month to your estimated treatment time!



- **Always** call the office, during business hours, prior to your appointment if you notice that any bands, wires, or brackets that are loose so we can prepare to repair whatever is broken and make sure we are prepared to repair it.
- If you notice that anything is loose or fell out of your mouth please save it and bring it to your next appointment.

- Every loose wire, band, or bracket will add time to your treatment plan. Approximately one month is added to your treatment plan for every appointment with broken appliances. Be careful what you are eating, and keep foreign objects out of your mouth.

### Emergency Care:

- **Please see our website for some great videos that can help guide you through basic issues that you may face with appliances.** You may be able to temporarily solve many issues yourself until you can get to our office during normal business hours.
- If you have pain, trauma, or bleeding, call the office and leave a voicemail on the emergency line: **(419) 882-6970**
  - Dr. Lenhart, Dr. Sherman, or another staff member will return your call as soon as possible.
- Because our appliances are in the mouth, where we chew food, talk, and for some, grind our teeth, things can become pokey or move out of place.
- As the teeth start to straighten and/ or spaces close your appliance starts to change and wires can begin to feel long or pokey in the back.
  - We know it can be frustrating, but it means PROGRESS!
  - Warm saltwater rinse, Peroxyl rinse, and/ or Rincinol can help with discomfort.

Placing wax over areas that are rubbing or poking can also help with discomfort (see website for video).



- If there is a loose piece that you can remove, put it in a plastic bag or envelope and bring it with you to your next appointment. Give us a call during business hours to let us know that your appliance has an issue.



- If you have a poking steel tie (pictured below) you can use a pencil eraser to push it back towards your braces. Please see the video on our website for more guidance if necessary.



- If your braces are poking you or irritating your cheeks, dry the area with a cotton ball and put soft wax on the piece that's sticking out. See the video on our website for more information.
- You can also trim (if needed or wax is not helping) thin wires (generally the wires at the beginning of your braces treatment) with nail clippers or wire cutters until you can be seen at the office. **There is a great video on our website for additional guidance.**



- If the wire has come out of a back tube, you can gently replace it with needle-nosed pliers or tweezers.



- After alleviating your discomfort, it is **very important that you still call our office when we open** to schedule a time to repair the problem. Allowing your appliance to remain damaged for an extended period of time may result in disruptions to your treatment plan.
- True orthodontic emergencies are rare, but when they occur, we are available to you. As a general rule, you should call our office when you experience severe pain, trauma, bleeding, or have a painful appliance problem you cannot take care of yourself.

### Retainers:

- After your treatment, you will receive a retainer. Please wear as directed. This generally means “full time” (all times except eating and brushing) for 10 weeks after appliances are removed.
- Wash retainers frequently with dish soap (Dawn) and water. Do not use toothpaste because it can make the retainers cloudy. Retainer/denture cleaners, such as Retainer Brite or Efferdent work great too!
- If you lose your retainer, please call our office immediately! You will need a replacement (there is a fee associated with replacing retainers).
- **Retainers are a lifetime commitment!** You should ALWAYS have a retainer that fits.
- With proper care retainers will last a long time, but you will likely eventually need retainers replaced in the future for a cost.
- Some patients have a lower fixed wire, which is glued to the back of the lower teeth.
  - It is important to use floss threaders to clean under the wire.
  - If anything is loose or broken please call us ASAP during business hours.
  - This wire is considered semi-permanent and will need maintenance.
  - It may eventually need repairs and/ or replacement. Repair and replacement are covered for up to 1 year.

