



Fixed Appliances

A fixed brace can be used to straighten crooked teeth like these.



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

1. Will it be painful?

It is likely to be sore for about 3-5 days each time the brace is adjusted. If necessary, simple painkillers such as the ones you would normally take for a headache should help – please read the instructions on the packet. If the brace rubs your lips or cheeks, you can use some wax to help with this. Your orthodontist can give you further advice.

2. Can I remove the brace?

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

3. Can I eat normally?

Yes, you should be able to eat normally. However, for your orthodontic treatment to work well and in the shortest possible time, it is important that you take care of your teeth and brace. In order to prevent damage to both, you should:

- Avoid sugary snacks/drinks between meals and at bedtimes
- Avoid sticky, chewy or hard sweets, mints and sugared chewing gum
- Avoid fizzy drinks (including diet drinks) and large amounts of fruit juice
- Hard or chewy foods – such as apples, carrots and crusty bread – can damage your brace. Avoid them or cut them up first!



This picture shows the permanent, unsightly marks on teeth caused by poor brushing and eating/drinking habits.



4. *What about tooth brushing?*

It is important that you brush your teeth well for at least 3 minutes twice a day. Use fluoride toothpaste. If possible, carry a brush with you for use after lunch. Brushing may take a little longer when you have a fixed brace so take your time. Pay particular attention to brush where the gums meet the teeth. Inter-dental brushes may help you to clean around the brace and in between the teeth.

An alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash should also be used daily. Use it at a different time to when you brush your teeth. This helps maintain the fluoride protection to your teeth. Avoid eating or rinsing for 20 minutes after use. Sugary snacks/drinks and poor cleaning of your teeth and brace will lead to permanent damage to your teeth as shown in the picture above.

5. *How long will treatment take?*

Usually about 12-30 months but this will vary accordingly to how severe your tooth problem is. Missed appointments or repeated breakages of the brace will add to your overall treatment time.

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

It may be necessary for you to wear elastics at some stage during your treatment. Elastics are worn inside the mouth during the day and night, including at mealtimes. This picture shows a patient wearing elastics.



7. *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 can vary.

8. *How often will I need treatment?*

You will need regular appointments (usually every 5-8 weeks) during treatment for the brace to be adjusted.

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

Yes. It will be important you still have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment so that your teeth can be checked for decay.



10. What if I play contact sports?

It is recommended that you wear a gum shield. This will also be the case if you take part in activities requiring a protective helmet.

11. What if I play a musical instrument?

A fixed brace may make it difficult for you to play your wind or brass instrument. You will need to discuss this with your music teacher and orthodontist.

12. 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 routine appointment as the breakage may slow your treatment, or may result in damage to your teeth. If you repeatedly break your brace, your treatment may be stopped early.

REMEMBER

- Brush your teeth for 3 minutes at least twice a day
- Use an alcohol free fluoride mouthwash once every day
- Avoid sugary snacks and drinks between meals and at bedtime
- Avoid fizzy drinks
- Avoid hard, sticky and chewy sweets and foods
- Continue to visit your dentist regularly
- Treatment will usually take 12-30 months
- You will need to wear retainers for some time after your treatment finishes