

# Fixed appliances

## Orthodontics Department Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

There are three main reasons for having orthodontic treatment:

- To improve the appearance of the teeth
- To improve the health of the teeth and gums
- To make it easier to eat

Now that you have a fixed appliance (brace) you may have some questions. This leaflet aims to answer some of those questions.

### Will it be painful?

It is likely to be sore for about three to five days each time the brace is adjusted. If necessary, painkillers such as the ones you would normally take for a headache may help (please read the instructions on the packet). If the brace rubs your lips or cheeks, we will give you some wax to help with this.

### Can I remove the brace?

No, as the brace you are now wearing is fixed to your teeth. You should not try to remove it as you may damage your teeth and the treatment will not work.

## Can I eat normally?

Yes, you should be able to 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 the following:

- Toffees, boiled sweets, chewing gum and chocolate bars.
- Fizzy drinks including diet drinks and large amounts of fruit juice.
- Hard foods which might damage the brace such as crunchy apples, crusty bread rolls etc.

Hard foods can be eaten with **care** if you cut them up first.

## What about brushing my teeth?

It is important you brush your teeth well three times a day using fluoride toothpaste. If possible, carry a brush with you to use after meals. Pay particular attention to brushing where the gums meet your teeth. Brushing may take a little longer when you have a fixed brace.

You should use a daily fluoride mouth rinse last thing at night after brushing your teeth to further protect the teeth. If you do not keep your teeth and brace clean, this could lead to permanent marks on your teeth. Poor tooth brushing could also result in early decay and may mean treatment has to be stopped early.

## What are the risks?

Slight shortening of the root ends of the teeth may occur during treatment. This is very common and usually has no long term effects.

Very rarely, more severe shortening can occur. If a tooth has had a previous injury, the nerve of the injured tooth can die over a period of time, with or without orthodontic treatment. During treatment this type of problem can flare up and cause pain and may require root canal treatment.

## **How long will the treatment take?**

It usually takes 12 to 24 months but will vary according to how severe your case is, so treatment can take longer. Cooperation is an important factor in completing your treatment on time. For example, it will take longer if you cancel or do not attend appointments, or if the brace keeps breaking.

It is not usually harmful to your health to have teeth which are not straight and if you want, you can leave your teeth as they are.

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

It may be necessary at some stage during the treatment for you to wear elastics which attach to your brace. These are often used to improve the bite of your teeth and are worn inside the mouth all the time including during mealtimes.

## **Will I need to wear another brace when my fixed brace is removed?**

Once the active phase of your treatment has finished, you will need 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 depending on your case.

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

You will need regular appointments during treatment for the brace to be adjusted. Your orthodontist will discuss this with you.

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

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

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

If you play contact sports, it is recommended that you wear a mouldable gum shield which can be bought from sports shops, or your own dentist may stock them. You will also need to wear a gum shield if you ride a bicycle or do roller skating or skateboarding. This will be discussed at your appointment with the orthodontist.

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

If you play a wind instrument, particularly the flute or a brass instrument, a fixed brace may make it more difficult. You will need to discuss this with your music teacher.

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

Ring up for an appointment as soon as possible on the following number:

01384 244719 (please leave a message and we will ring you back as soon as we can)

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, treatment may be stopped. The orthodontic nurses who work in the department can give you advice, or alternatively you can speak to your own dentist.

## **Can I find out more?**

The following website has more information on orthodontic fixed appliances:

[British Orthodontic Society](#)

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Orthodontic department on 01384 244719 (please leave a message and we will ring you back as soon as we can)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/orthodontics/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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