

Guidelines for Preventive Maintenance During Orthodontics

Not long ago, it was common for someone to go through two, three or even four years of braces only to have the braces removed at the end of the orthodontic treatment and find that many teeth now had cavities, or that unsightly spots now had formed on the teeth. Gum disease may even have developed from not having the teeth cleaned enough while the braces were on.

Current scientific technology allows us to greatly minimize the likelihood, if not eliminate all together, these problems from happening. All we have to do is follow the easy 1-2-3 program outlined below and the chances of having nice straight teeth that are decay free and free of any spots or stains, with healthy gums are excellent.

- 1) **The teeth must be kept as clean as possible** while the braces are being worn. This means you should brush at least four times a day, preferably right after you eat. This will dislodge food particles stuck around your braces. Also avoid hard or sticky foods that will mechanically disconnect the wires from the brackets. This includes potato or taco chips, popcorn, chewing gum and sticky candies. You should also avoid soda (even diet soda) or other carbonated beverages as they will increase the chances of having spots to form on the teeth around the brackets.
- 2) **Use prescription fluoride faithfully every day as prescribed.** Over the counter fluorides (such as Act) are not strong enough to do the job predictably.
- 3) **Have your teeth cleaned and checked by your dentist every three months** while the braces are on. It's important to know that your orthodontist does not clean the teeth or inspect for cavities even though they see you every 4 to 6 weeks. It's just not their job, and we don't want you to be lulled into the belief that the monthly orthodontic visits are a substitute for seeing your regular dentist.

As always, should you have any questions about your orthodontic care, please do not hesitate to contact us at anytime.

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