

Taking Care of your BRACES

Your orthodontic treatment has just begun!

Your teeth may ache...

For most people, the teeth will feel tight during the first few days after band-up. When you eat and brush your teeth, there may be discomfort. The braces may be a bit annoying. But don't worry, discomfort is normal as your teeth move.

But you can still eat!

- **Avoid very hard food** as it may cause breakage and damage to wire or braces.
 - E.g. Ice blocks, roll-ups, redskins, toffees, jaw crackers, crab shells, bones
- **Avoid sweets and fizzy drinks** as it may cause decay around or under the braces.
 - E.g. Lollies, chocolates, soft drinks
- **Cut up all food** into small pieces. Please chew slowly and carefully.



What to look out for:

- **SORE SPOTS:** Use the wax provided in your Band-up kit to cover the sharp or sticking out part of the braces and wire. If you swallow the wax accidentally, don't worry, it is harmless.
- **BREAKAGE:** If any brackets, wires, or bands are loosened, give us a call as soon as possible. We will provide you with advice, and organise a Breakage Appointment ideally within 1 week, according to clinic policy.
- **WIRE STICKING OUT:** DO NOT attempt to cut the wire yourself! If the wire sticks out at the back of the mouth and is causing pain, please call us as soon as possible, and we will arrange a Breakage Appointment to trim the wire. Refer to 'Sore spots' above to minimise the wire scratching or poking inside the mouth.

Regular appointments are NOT for breakages! We will assist you in booking a Breakage Appointment and/or reschedule your regular appointment(s) to accommodate any changes in circumstances. Sometimes you may need to see your family dentist for a dental emergency if indicated.

Be Very Careful! Each time when the braces are damaged, the treatment time may be extended by 1-3 months. Please also maintain good hygiene, as decay leaves marks on your teeth which stay after braces are removed.

Cleaning: It will take longer time and more attention at first while you are getting used to cleaning your teeth with braces. But your smile isn't as beautiful without healthy teeth and gums, right?

Do your future self a favour and take those extra few minutes a day to clean your teeth properly 😊:

- **Floss** the gap between each tooth, clean **above** the wire for your upper teeth and **below** the wire for your lower teeth. Your **interdental brushes** in your Band-up kit will help you remove bigger food chunks. These brushes are tiny and portable, so bring them you to meal breaks if you need a quick freshen-up.
- **Clean your braces, not just teeth!** Every time you brush your teeth, brush your braces too. Braces can act as a "plaque trap", which may lead to increased risk of cavities and gum disease.
- **Use fluoride toothpaste** with normal and interdental brushes.
- **Use mouth rinse** and teeth moisturizer as advised by Dr Ho.
- **Continue to see your general dentist** every 6 months for routine check-up and cleaning.

Elastic Bands: The fastest way to stop wearing elastics in the long run is wearing them!

The length of the treatment time depends a lot on whether you wear the elastic bands, as the teeth will not move if you don't wear them. **Take off elastics when** eating, brushing teeth, or other mouth-strenuous activities like playing wind instruments. **But remember to put them back on!** And, fair warning, the Doctor and Nurses can tell if you haven't been wearing them, so please wear the elastic bands as instructed. If you want to double-check which teeth need the elastics on, or are running out of elastics, contact us and we will help you.

We understand that having braces requires patience and discipline, and proper dental care is important in keeping your treatment course on time and may even help reduce it. It will contribute to the long-term health of your teeth and gums. And you will be rewarded with a **LIFETIME HEALTHY AND BEAUTIFUL SMILE!**

