

Oral hygiene and Fixed Braces

The Basics

Oral hygiene is how well you clean your mouth and includes the teeth and gums. A good oral hygiene is important to the health of your teeth and mouth.

If you do not clean your teeth well this results in the collection of food and bacteria that attach to the teeth and this is called "Plaque". Plaque is an enemy of dental health. Bacteria eat the food that is in the plaque and they release harmful chemicals that damage the enamel and cause the gums to swell up and bleed. This swelling of the gum is known as gingivitis.

Maintaining a good oral hygiene involves daily cleaning, a good diet, and professional care. Frequent visits with a general dentist for examination and cleaning are critical to prevention. Most people see their dentist every 6 months. Some patients may need more frequent visits. Talk to the orthodontist and dentist about their recommendations.

Plaque will collect easily around braces because they stick out, off the surface of your teeth and they food gets easily stuck around them. It is very important to remove this plaque to maintain a good oral hygiene and avoid any damage.

What you need

- +** **Interdental brushes**
TePe brushes are quite useful to insert in between the brackets under the wire. Use them to clean the side edges of the brackets that are hard to reach with a toothbrush.
- +** **Battery Operated toothbrush**
We recommend the oral-B toothbrush with a round head. Brush gently since aggressive brushing can cause gum recession. Angle the brush at 45 degrees between the brace and the gums and focus on cleaning all the teeth from left to right. Also brush from the top, bottom, and middle towards and between the braces and wire. Avoid trying to brush all the teeth at once. It helps to limit brushing to a couple of teeth at a time. Do not rush.
- +** **Travel toothbrush**
During the day when you're out and about use a travel toothbrush. It is important that the teeth are brushed after every meal. Food can collect very easily around the braces and therefore needs to be removed on a regular basis.
- +** **Floss**
We recommend Superfloss by oral B. Insert the floss in between the brackets under the wire and floss between the teeth and the gums in each space.
- +** **WaterPik**
For those who find flossing difficult we recommend a waterpik . It flushes plaque away between the teeth using a jet of water.



Interdental Brushes

- +** **Mouth rinse**
A fluoride rinse will help reduce the chance of developing cavities and white spots on the teeth. The best way to a mouth rinse is to check the label the bottle. It should indicate that it contains Fluoride. Antibacterial mouth rinse such as Corsodyl should only be used under the instruction of the Orthodontist.
- +** **Disclosing tablets**
At the start of your Orthodontic treatment, a good idea is to self-check your brushing. For this purpose, specifically designed plaque disclosing tablets or liquid is used to indicate if all areas are plaque free. If not, the areas where plaque was not fully removed, will pick up the colour of the disclosing tablet or liquid (pink/purple). If this is the case, those areas need to be re-brushed and disclosing tablets used again.