



GORTON & SCHMOHL ORTHODONTICS

DECAY, DECALCIFICATION, AND GINGIVITIS

To maintain healthy teeth while wearing braces and to reduce the possibility of decay (cavities), decalcification (white spots on the enamel between the bracket and the gums), and gingivitis (inflammation of the gums), please follow these recommendations:

- 1.) Oral hygiene.** Brushing with a fluoride toothpaste for at least three minutes in the morning and before going to bed (play music track and dance around the room or use a timer while brushing). The use of a travel toothbrush after lunch is also encouraged. After brushing, look at your braces closely in the mirror to make sure all food debris and plaque (whitish material around the braces, under the wires and between the braces and the gums) has been totally removed. The braces should look like shiny silver. If you can not see the back braces well, have someone check it for you (a small flashlight is helpful). A basic part of the oral hygiene is flossing. We encourage you to floss at least once each day before bedtime brushing. We will show you how to floss around your braces as well as how to brush your braces properly.
- 2.) Use Fluoride.** Fluoride will become part of the enamel and strengthen it. Brushing with fluoride toothpaste at night spit the extra toothpaste out but do not rinse with water. The idea is to leave a small amount of fluoride toothpaste on your teeth all night.
- 3.) Avoid sugars.** All candy is in this category as well as dried fruits. The bacteria that cause decay, decalcification, and gingivitis utilize sugar as their food. The longer sugar stays in the mouth, the more time they have to convert the sugar to acid, the higher the bacterial count and the more likely problems could occur.
- 4.) Avoid carbonated beverages.** The carbonation from soft drinks contributes to the breakdown of the enamel. This includes all carbonated beverages, including regular, diet, sport and “natural” carbonated beverages.

The rewards of braces – straight teeth, a beautiful smile and a healthy mouth – are achievable goals for all our patients. We need your help to make sure the teeth and the gums are also bright, shiny, and healthy at the completion of treatment.