



Eating Habits and Orthodontics

Much work and effort has gone into the construction and placement of your orthodontic appliances. We encourage you to take care of your braces by keeping them clean and being very careful with the types of foods you put in your mouth. Breakage of your braces results in extra appointments (usually during school hours) for repairs and will lengthen the total time of your treatment. Please read the following information and ask us for any clarification.

Hard Foods

Hard foods may cause damage by bending the wires, loosening the cement under the bands or breaking the brackets that are bonded to the teeth. Some examples of those foods are listed below along with the ways that they may be eaten.

- **Carrots or Celery:** Grate, cook, or cut into thin pieces.
- **Apples:** Cut into bite size pieces.
- **French Bread, Hard Rolls, Bagels:** Avoid hard crusts.
- **Corn on the Cob, Chicken, Ribs:** Cut off cob or bone.
- **Popcorn:** Okay to eat top half (but not the bottom half) of the popcorn bag.
- **Please Do Not Eat Nuts, Hard Pretzels, Hard Pizza Crust, Granola Bars, Corn Nuts, Beef Jerky, or Chips.**
- **Please Do Not Chew Ice Cubes.**

Sticky Foods

Sticky foods can damage the appliances by bending wires and loosening the cement, actually pulling them off the teeth. **Please do not eat taffy, sugar daddies, peanut brittle, caramels, candy apples, licorice, Power Bars, or any of the currently popular types of sticky candies such as Starburst or Now and Later.** The only gum permissible is one stick at a time of sugarless gum – no regular gum or bubblegum of any kind, please.

Foods High in Sugar Content

Foods high in sugar content should be limited. The germs (bacteria) that cause tooth decay, decalcification, and gum disease need sugary food on your teeth in order to live. Sweets provide an excessive food source for these germs to produce their bad effects; this is why you need to minimize the consumption of food with sugar. Please brush your teeth immediately after each meal, since most of the damage occurs within the first half hour after eating. Be especially careful that the area between the bands and the gums are shiny and clean. **Gums that bleed need more brushing – do not avoid them.** While attending school or away from home, the problem of brushing after meals can be solved by carrying the pocket toothbrush which we have given you.