Protecting your orthodontic appliance while eating

Torresorthodontics.com

When taking care of braces or an orthodontic appliance, softer foods are recommended—especially after an appointment when your mouth may be sore. As a general rule, if you have to question whether you can eat something with your appliance, it's better to take it slow or avoid it altogether. Additionally, do not chew on non-food items such as pens, pencils, or fingernails.

Avoid hard or sticky foods

Sticky foods can get wrapped around your appliances and cause them to break or come loose. Hard foods can break your braces and damage your appliances.

- Tootsie Rolls®
- Caramels
- Starburst®
- Now and Later®
- Skittles®
- Taffy
- Mike and Ike®
- Hard candies
- Ice cubes
- Beef jerky
- Granola bars
- Suckers/lollipops
- Hard breadsticks
- Popcorn kernels (fully popped is fine)

Enjoy soft, orthodontic-friendly foods

Many of your favorite soft foods and drinks are perfectly safe with braces or appliances.

- Water
- Milk
- Crystal Light®
- Gatorade G2®
- Propel®
- Yogurt
- Pudding
- Bananas
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Fruits without pits
- Crackers
- Cheese
- Mashed potatoes
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
- Pasta including ravioli, spaghetti, and macaroni

Avoid high-sugar and high-acidity drinks

High-sugar and high-acidity drinks, when mixed with saliva, create plaque—a sticky film that coats the teeth and is difficult to remove completely, even with brushing.

- Soft drinks
- Gatorade®
- Diet soft drinks
- Energy drinks
- Powerade®
- High-sugar fruit juices

Cut food into smaller pieces

Some foods are fine to enjoy, as long as they are cut into smaller pieces which won't damage your braces or appliance.

- Apples
- Bagels
- Carrots
- Chips
- Celery
- Taco shells
- Pizza and pizza crust

Taking care of your teeth during treatment

Torresortho.com

Excellent oral hygiene with an orthodontic appliance, like braces or clear aligners, is essential for keeping your teeth and gums healthy. The right toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss will make it easier to perform the proper orthodontic care. If you need recommendations on these items, please ask! Torres Orthodontics can help guide your braces care regimen, or clear aligners care regimen, and help you select the best products for your teeth and appliance.

Brush your teeth three times a day

Brush your teeth three times per day, for three minutes per session. With braces, angle your toothbrush around each bracket and under the wire.

Floss at least once a day

Flossing is essential for maintaining good oral hygiene and should be performed once each day. When flossing with braces, it is best to use waxed floss with a floss threader, which will slip more easily between each tooth without catching.

Rinse twice a day

Rinse with Crest ProRinse mouthwash twice a day—once in the morning and once after dinner. Crest ProRinse can be purchased almost anywhere you buy toothpaste.

Use gum or breath mints with xylitol

Use gum or breath mints containing xylitol four times per day, immediately after meals or snacking, for five to ten minutes. Consistency is key!
We recommend Epic Gum, but any brand can be used as long as xylitol is the first ingredient.

About xylitol

- Xylitol is a natural sugar found in many fruits and vegetables as well as birch trees. It is a healthy, cavity-preventing sweetener that has been used in foods since 1960 and was FDA approved in 1963. Xylitol is acceptable for non-insulin-dependent patients.

Xylitol prevents cavities, tooth decay, and other common problems

- Xylitol disrupts the bacteria that feed off of the sugars in the foods we eat. It has been shown to reduce cavities up to 80 percent and helps reverse early cavity formation.
- It can reduce ear infections by up to 40 percent.
- Xylitol reduces plaque formation by stimulating saliva, a natural tooth protector, and preventing bacteria from producing acids that stick to the teeth, gums, and tongue.
- Xylitol can also minimize and prevent unattractive tooth scarring and puffy gums during orthodontic treatment.

Warning: xylitol can be toxic to dogs. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Poison Control Center is warning veterinarians, their staff, and pet owners that xylitol can cause serious and possibly life-threatening problems for dogs. Dogs ingesting large amounts of products sweetened with xylitol may have a sudden drop in blood sugar, resulting in depression, loss of coordination, and seizures, according to Dr. Eric K Dunayer, a consulting veterinarian in clinical toxicology for the Poison Control Center. The center is most concerned about products in which xylitol is the primary ingredient. These signs can develop quite rapidly, at times less than 30 minutes after ingestion of the product. Therefore, it is important that pet owners seek veterinary treatment immediately.

Orthodontic repairs and emergencies

Torresortho.com

Orthodontic repair

Most orthodontic repairs can wait to be handled at your next regularly scheduled appointment. If any of the following happen, follow the repair instructions below and call our office on the next weekday. The receptionist will let you know if it is an immediate concern that should be addressed or if it can wait until your next regular appointment.

- **Loose bands or brackets**
- **Broken archwire**
- **Missing or loose elastic**
- **Broken or lost appliances**
- **Poking wires**

Orthodontic emergency

Luckily, true orthodontic emergencies are rare, but they are something that patients may encounter during treatment. Severe concerns may require emergency care and shouldn't wait. Schedule an emergency orthodontist appointment by calling our office during business hours or the appropriate emergency number for the location near you if you experience one of the following:

- **An injury to your mouth, face, or teeth**
- **Significant pain in your gums, mouth, or face**

How to handle common issues with braces

Loose bands or brackets

Try to remove the loose band or bracket with finger pressure. You may have to remove the tie wire or elastic ligatures first. (Use a finger nail clipper for this.) Brush well around the area. Save your band or bracket and bring them to your next appointment.

Poking or broken archwires

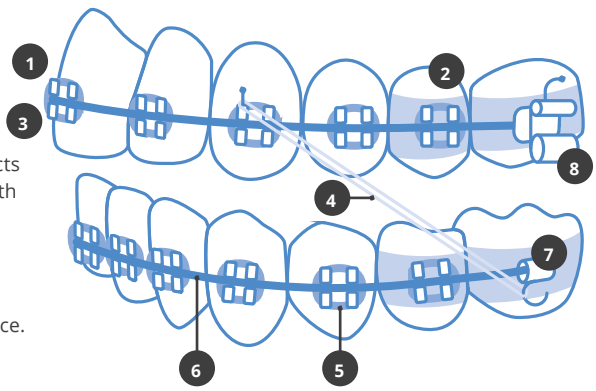
Temporarily fix a loose wire by using the back of a spoon or the eraser end of a pencil to carefully push the wire back into place. If the loose wire is broken or causing irritation to your lips or cheeks, place some wax or a piece of sugar-free gum over the wire.

Broken or lost appliances

If you lose an appliance, call us for an appointment. Contact the office if the retainer or appliance is broken and the office will advise of next steps. It's okay to continue to wear your appliance if it is only cracked (not broken).

Your orthodontic appliance

Use this diagram as a guide to help us understand any issues you may be experiencing.



1. **Direct bonding** The bracket is bonded directly to the tooth surface.
2. **Band** Thin metal ring attaching the bracket to the tooth.
3. **Bracket** Small attachment holding the archwire in place.
4. **Elastics** Rubber bands connecting two brackets to move the teeth.
5. **Tie wires/elastic ligatures** Fine wires or rubber bands used with Edgewise brackets that hold the archwire to the brackets. Begg brackets use pins instead of wire.
6. **Archwire** The main wire that acts like a track which teeth are guided along.
7. **Buccal tube** Holds the end of the archwire safely in place.
8. **Headgear tube** Holds the inner bow of headgear.