

TAKING CARE OF YOUR BRACES

TIPS FOR AVOIDING BROKEN BRACKETS

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One of the main concerns that comes along with having braces is trying to avoid breaking them. A broken brace (or bracket) can mean more time sitting in the orthodontist's chair to have it fixed and extended treatment time. Besides, who wants to keep spending time visiting the orthodontist for broken braces if we can do things to avoid it?

Common Issues

Often times when people have a broken brace, it was caused by something that could have been avoided. Perhaps it was a food that they ate or something that they did, but even if it could not have been avoided, the fact remains that it can be a nuisance, as well as time consuming to address.

Some of the most common problems while in braces include broken braces, loose bands or appliances, broken wires, and wires that are pokey. If you break a brace, this can lead to a broken wire. When you have a broken wire in your mouth, it can be a source of irritation and pain.

Did you know?

There are glues that make it so you can't break your braces off. It is so strong, you would never have a broken brace. The problem is, when we try and remove the

braces, we would also break the tooth and remove enamel. In other words, the glue is designed to be

strong enough to eat with, but is engineered to break if you bite on something too hard. This way, we can remove your braces and not damage the enamel on your teeth.



Prevention is Key

The best way to avoid broken braces is to try to prevent them the best that you can. You may not be able to completely avoid them throughout your time of wearing braces, but there are some things you can do to reduce the risks associated.

Here are some tips for avoiding broken braces:

Avoid Certain Foods. There are many foods that will increase your chances of a broken brace. There are three basic rules about food when you have braces:

1. Do not eat anything hard
2. Do not eat anything sticky
3. Do not eat anything with your front teeth

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Examples of hard foods include pretzels, granola bars, nuts, ice, and hard candy. Examples of sticky foods are candies such as Tootsie Rolls, taffy, caramel, and Starbursts. The third rule is really pretty simple – use a fork and a knife when you can. Examples of this are an apple. Cut it with a knife first, don't bite directly into an apple. Others include corn on the cob, carrots, bagels, meat, French bread, pizza, and other foods that are hard or overly chewy.

If you play sports, be careful not to bite on your mouthpiece. In school, do not bite on pens and pencils. Both of these are common ways we find that our patients break their braces.

Additional Precautions to Take

It is also important to make sure that you are taking care of your teeth by brushing and flossing each day. When you have braces, you should be brushing at least three times a day. Before bedtime is the most important. Brush well and floss before bed every night. And most importantly, see your general dentist for a cleaning every 4-6 months while in treatment. If you do not clean your teeth well, the plaque around your braces can weaken the glue and cause you to have more broken braces than if you kept your teeth really clean.

Getting Help

To have broken braces repaired, you will need to contact our office. The broken appliances



take time to fix, and pieces may need to be replaced, rather than just repaired. If you have a broken brace, please contact us to let us know. We may have you hold off and fix it at your next appointment, which will save you some time.

If you have a broken wire and it is poking and irritating you, try placing some wax on the pokey wire or use a pair of nail clippers to clip the wire close to the brace. This will help to reduce the irritation and discomfort while you are waiting to see us.

Your braces are going to be a part of your mouth for the duration of the treatment. But that doesn't mean you have to spend additional time getting repairs. Keep prevention in mind and take the steps to try to avoid breaking brackets. By keeping the above tips in mind, you should do a lot towards minimizing broken braces!