

How to Maintain Good Oral Hygiene With Braces

Braces create extra spaces where plaque and food can collect, which makes daily cleaning more important. Good brushing and flossing habits help prevent cavities, gum irritation, and white spots around the brackets during orthodontic treatment.

How to Brush With Braces

1. **Rinse first:** Rinse with water to loosen food particles around the brackets and wires before brushing.
2. **Use a soft-bristled toothbrush:** A soft toothbrush or electric toothbrush works well for cleaning around braces without damaging the brackets.
3. **Brush above the brackets:** Angle the toothbrush along the gumline and use small circular motions to clean where the gums and teeth meet.
4. **Brush below the brackets:** Clean underneath each bracket to remove plaque and food that collect around the wire.
5. **Brush the brackets themselves:** Gently brush each bracket and wire area to remove trapped debris.
6. **Brush all tooth surfaces:** Don't forget the backs of the teeth and chewing surfaces.

How to Floss With Braces

Flossing with braces takes more time, but it is important for cleaning between teeth and under the wires where a toothbrush cannot reach.

1. **Use floss threaders or orthodontic floss picks:** These tools help guide floss under the archwire.
2. **Gently move the floss between the teeth:** Slide the floss carefully up and down along each side of the tooth without forcing it.
3. **Repeat between every tooth:** Take your time and make sure each area is cleaned fully.
4. **Floss every day:** Daily flossing helps prevent plaque buildup, gum inflammation, and cavities during treatment.

Tools That Make Cleaning Easier

Cleaning around braces takes extra time because brackets and wires create more places for plaque and food to collect. A few simple tools can make brushing and flossing much easier.

Helpful tools include:

- Floss threaders for cleaning under the wire
- Orthodontic floss picks made for braces
- Interdental brushes for cleaning around brackets
- Water flossers for added cleaning support

What Happens If You Do Not Brush Your Teeth With Braces?

Brackets and wires make it easier for plaque and food to stay trapped around the teeth. Without careful brushing and flossing, this buildup can quickly lead to cavities, swollen gums, bad breath, and white spots on the teeth that may remain after braces are removed.

Poor oral hygiene can also slow orthodontic treatment if gum inflammation or tooth decay needs to be treated first. Keeping the teeth and gums healthy helps protect your smile and allows treatment to stay on schedule.

Keep Up With Routine Dental Cleanings

Regular dental cleanings are still important during orthodontic treatment. Professional cleanings help remove plaque and buildup around brackets and wires in areas that are harder to reach at home.

If your child is a pediatric patient at South OC Pediatric Dentistry, routine cleaning appointments will be scheduled for you throughout braces treatment so preventive care stays consistent and treatment stays on track.