

You have taken the first step toward having a beautiful smile to last a lifetime! Here are some helpful instructions to keep your treatment easy and enjoyable. Let's get started...

- *Brushing with braces is different!* – It is more difficult, but the new method will become part of your routine after you practice it for several days. Ideally, people with braces should brush vigorously after each meal and just before bedtime.
- *Toothbrushes* – You have been provided with a special orthodontic toothbrush in your home-care kit. You may also have been instructed to purchase an electric toothbrush. We recommend the OralB with 3D brushing action. These can usually be purchased at Wal-Mart or Target.
- *Toothpaste/Fluoride* – The type of toothpaste you use is up to you. Just make sure that it has fluoride. You were provided a tube of special fluoride in your home-care bag. This is a stronger concentration of fluoride and should be substituted for your regular toothpaste when you brush just before bedtime. Be sure not to eat, drink, or rinse with anything after brushing with your concentrated fluoride. The fluoride can decrease the likelihood of cavities or tooth-scars during your orthodontic treatment.
- *Toothbrushing Methods*
 - Begin brushing the outside surfaces of the teeth with small circular motions. Make the circle large enough to brush both the gums and the teeth (upper and lower). Repeat this procedure for the outside surface of each tooth at least twice.
 - Next, brush the inside surfaces of all the teeth with the same motion.
 - Brush the chewing, or biting, surfaces of the teeth.
 - Last, but not least, brush the surface of the tongue; not brushing the tongue is the most common cause of bad breath.
- *Waterpik* – This is an essential part of being able to clean food and plaque from the braces. When you use it, fill up the water bath with either: (1) ½ warm water and ½ Listerine or (2) All warm water with about ¼ teaspoon of household bleach. Either of these 2 options can clean your teeth as well as flossing if done properly. Be sure to aim the Waterpik tip underneath the wire between each tooth and rinse toward the gums. Do this for about 5-10 seconds per tooth. If you have an area that is a little swollen, you can also try mixing in about ¼ to ½ teaspoon of table salt to a full bath of warm water (no bleach or Listerine). The salt-water will help to decrease the swelling of your gum tissues.
- *Flossing* – Flossing your teeth with dental floss is recommended once a day if the Waterpik is not being used daily. This will help reduce the plaque in between the teeth, which can reduce the likelihood of cavities or gum inflammation. Please use either the Super-Floss or Floss-threaders that you were given in your home-care bag.
- *Oral Rinse* – Plaque-fighting rinses such as Act can be a helpful supplement to brushing and flossing. They should not, however, be used as a substitute for good oral hygiene.

If you have any other questions or need a demonstration on brushing or flossing technique, please be sure to ask any one of us. We will be happy to show you personally how to keep your teeth clean and your breath fresh! Also, don't forget to smile a lot and show off those new braces!