

Braces create small ledges, nooks, and crannies for food deposits which can lead to cavities and gum problems. This makes brushing and flossing even more important while you are wearing braces. When you brush and floss, handle your appliances carefully so they won't break or loosen. Following a few simple eating tips will also keep you appliances and smile healthy.

Decalcification (White or brown marks on teeth)

- Can happen to all patients but its prevalence increases when wearing braces because it is more difficult to clean the teeth.
- Using a .05% fluoride rinse daily can prevent decalcification.

Brushing

- Brush three times a day (after meals and before going to bed)
- Use fluoride toothpaste to fight cavities
- Electric tooth brushes are great for braces
- Oral irrigators (i.e. water pik) are helpful but are not a substitute for brushing
- Proper technique is essential
 - Brush the outside surface of each tooth at least 10 times
 - Brush the inside surface of each tooth at least 10 times
 - Brush where your teeth and gum meet, using a rolling motion. Place the brush at a 45 degree angle at the gumline and roll the brush down and away from the gums.
 - Brush the chewing surfaces of your teeth

Flossing

- A tooth brush cannot clean between your teeth so brushing alone is not enough
- Flossing at least once a day is important to prevent decay and gum disease
- Floss threaders are helpful and are included in your oral hygiene kit

Mouth Rinses

- Rinsing your mouth after brushing and flossing with a **Fluoride containing** mouthrinse can be a useful in preventing white spots and cavities
- Mouth rinses do not substitute for improper brushing and flossing
- They can be picked up at any local pharmacy

Your Dentist

- It is important to keep regular check ups with your family dentist
- You may need more frequent hygiene visits while undergoing orthodontic treatment
- Your dentist will take the necessary X-rays to check for cavities