

Fixed Braces - What to Expect

Patient Information

What are fixed braces?

Fixed braces, often known as 'train track braces,' are the most common type of orthodontic appliance used. They consist of brackets (small squares) attached to your teeth, and very thin metal wires that gently straighten your teeth.



Frequently Asked Questions

How do the braces work?

The wires exert small forces on the teeth through the brackets (squares) to allow them to move to a straighter position. The brackets are attached to the teeth using orthodontic glues, the wires are then attached to the brackets with either coloured elastic rings, or they will simply clip into a self-closing bracket.



Can I have colours on my brace?

In the majority of cases tiny coloured elastics are required to hold the wire in position. You can have either 1 or 2 colours on your brace and we change these at every adjust appointment, which is usually every 10-12 weeks. If you prefer for your brace to look more discrete, you can opt for either the silver or tooth coloured elastics.

Please be aware that occasionally we will need to use a brace that has a different type of bracket which does not require these coloured elastics. These brackets are called 'self ligating', which means they have metal 'doors' that close over the wire instead

Clear power chain

As your treatment progresses, we will sometimes use small metal ties or clear elastic chain called 'powerchain' instead of the coloured elastic bands. If we use this, you will be unable to have colours on that part of your brace. Also, as powerchain is clear, it is easily stained – try to avoid food & drink with strong colouring to prevent this chain changing colour.



Does having the brace fitted hurt?

No, and we do not use drills or injections - the procedure is painless, and the orthodontist or therapist fitting your braces will talk you through the procedure before and during the process. After having your brace fitted we will go through instructions on how to care for your brace.

How long will it take me to get used to my brace?

Every patient's experience with braces is different, however patients tend to adjust to the brace within a few days, but it can take up to a week, occasionally a little more.

What do I do if I find the brace uncomfortable?

It is likely that your teeth will feel tender following your brace being fitted. This means that your brace has already begun working. Stick to a softer diet and, if necessary, you can take painkillers (such as ones you would normally take for a headache). *Please read the instructions on the packet to decide if you can take them and the dose that you require.*



We will supply you with some orthodontic wax for you to use if you find the brace is rubbing in an area, this will help prevent it making your mouth sore.

How long does treatment take?

Once you are accepted for Orthodontic care you will be expected to attend every 10-12 weeks for adjustments to your brace: these will be during school hours. When you attend you will normally be seen by an Orthodontic Therapist, who is trained to the highest level to administer your care. All treatments take place under the prescription/supervision of your Orthodontic Specialist. Treatment will vary from patient to patient (and you will be advised of this in your assessment), but generally between 12 and 18 months. If you take care of your brace well, progress will be much faster. Missed appointments or broken brackets will prolong your treatment. When your treatment is over and your brace is removed, you will need to wear retainers at night, which are a thin plastic appliance (much like a thin gumshield), to maintain the improvements we have achieved together.

Can I eat normally?

You can eat normally, however we do advise that you adjust your diet and how you eat throughout your treatment to prevent damaging your brace. At the start of treatment and when having the brace adjusted, your teeth are likely to feel sore. Stick to a softer diet; we advise foods such as pasta, noodles, mashed potato and gravy, soups, etc.



Hard, crunchy and chewy foods break braces, as well as biting nails, chewing pen lids and picking your brace. **It is essential you avoid these foods and habits throughout your treatment.** Apples, raw vegetables etc however can be cut up into small pieces and eaten carefully on your back teeth.

Broken brackets and bent wires will prolong your treatment, so avoiding these foods is necessary.

Will I need elastics?

It may be necessary for you to wear elastics during your treatment. These are used to apply pressure to the teeth and jaw to correct the alignment of your teeth and occlusion (bite). You will be advised of this if it is necessary.



What if I play contact sports?

We would advise using a re-mouldable gum shield, as your teeth will be moving throughout treatment and a traditional gum shield will not fit. We sell Oproshield re-mouldable gum shields at our Cambridge practice. Please ask for our current prices - purchase over the phone and receive by post (excluding p&p).

How do I clean my teeth?

It is important you brush your teeth and brace well, as failure to keep your teeth and brace clean can lead to gingivitis (gum disease), permanent scarring of your teeth (white marks) or decay.

Brushing Instructions

- Use either a manual or electric toothbrush
- Brush 3 times a day: after breakfast, lunch (or as soon as you get home), and after your evening meal
- Spend 5 minutes each time ensuring you clean everywhere; all around your teeth and brace, not forgetting to brush your gums
- Keeping a routine is a good way of ensuring you are keeping everywhere clean
- We also recommend cleaning between the brackets and wire with Tepe brushes
- Rinse with a fluoride mouthwash before bed to help strengthen the teeth

For more detailed information, please read our oral hygiene leaflet.



Clean teeth and healthy gums



Inflamed gums due to poor brushing



White marks (decalcification) due to poor diet and brushing

Do I need to continue to see my general dentist?

Yes. Please continue to visit your general dentist regularly throughout any treatment you receive under our care.

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