



MENAI
ORTHODONTICS

BEAUTIFUL CONFIDENT SMILES

Braces Information Sheet

An introduction to braces

Welcome to your new braces!

We understand starting braces treatment may feel a little daunting, but it doesn't need to be. With this information sheet, we've outlined everything you need to know. All the tricky questions are answered: from what braces do, braces care, how to brush and floss with braces, to ensuring you maintain excellent oral health for the duration of treatment.



What happens after braces are fitted?

As with all orthodontic appliances, it may take a little time to get used to braces. It usually takes between a few days and up to two weeks to adjust to braces being in your mouth and integrating the necessary changes to your oral health regime.

Because braces work by placing a force on a tooth or teeth, this results in teeth moving and becoming straighter. While this is what we want, you may feel soreness around your teeth during the initial stages and any time your braces are adjusted. It's important to recognise this is normal.

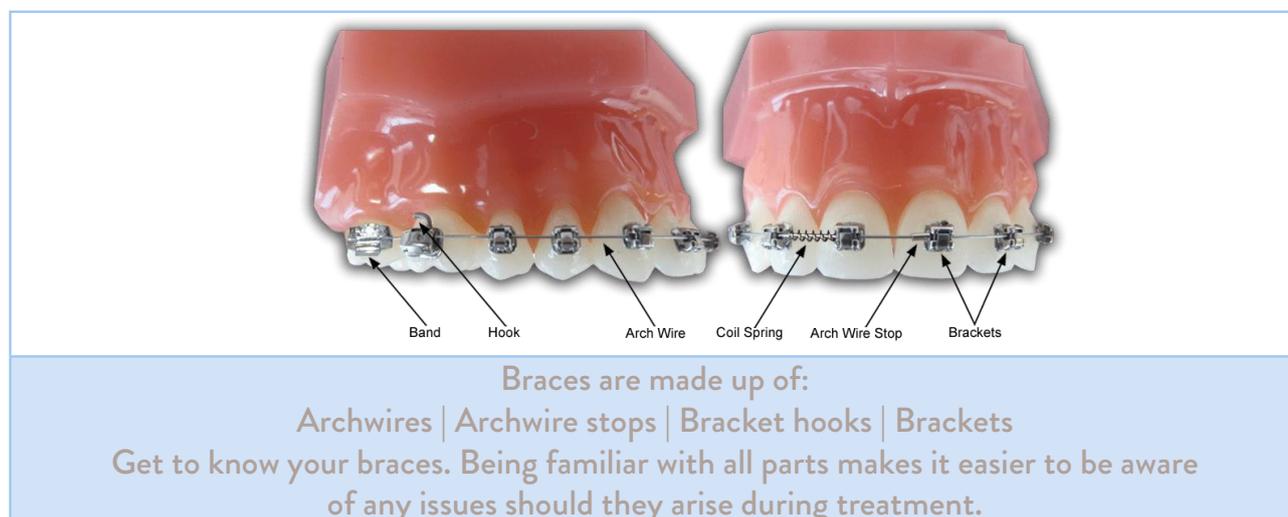
While your teeth are sore, it is recommended you eat softer foods (cold foods often provide more relief too!) and taking pain relief, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Remember, the discomfort will subside after the initial movement has taken place.

In some circumstances, 'extra' pieces will be added to your braces to ensure your teeth move where they need to. These pieces include, bite stops, plastic tubing and coil springs. In the latter stages of treatment, closing coils, power-chains or elastics may be used. If you have any questions or concerns, be sure to let us know.



What are the different parts of braces?

It's important to be familiar with all aspects of your braces to understand what each part does. Take a look at the image below.



Your next appointment

For most patients, appointments begin at 12 week intervals. As treatment advances, it is likely appointments will become more frequent to ensure spaces can be closed effectively and the finishing touches can be put on your beautiful smile!

If you are unsure about any part of your treatment, for example, if anything comes loose or is uncomfortable, please call our office before your scheduled visit and we'll assess whether an additional appointment is required.

How long does braces treatment last?

Everyone's teeth are different, which means there is no simple answer to this question. When planning your personalised treatment program, we do our very best to straighten teeth and correct any bite discrepancy in the shortest possible time.

Because we're working as a team, you can do your bit to have your braces removed 'on time', by:

- Avoiding breakages to your braces
- Maintaining great oral hygiene (brushing and flossing as instructed)
- Wearing elastics as instructed.

Keeping appointments is also key to minimizing the braces treatment time. When appointments are missed or postponed, treatment times can be extended.

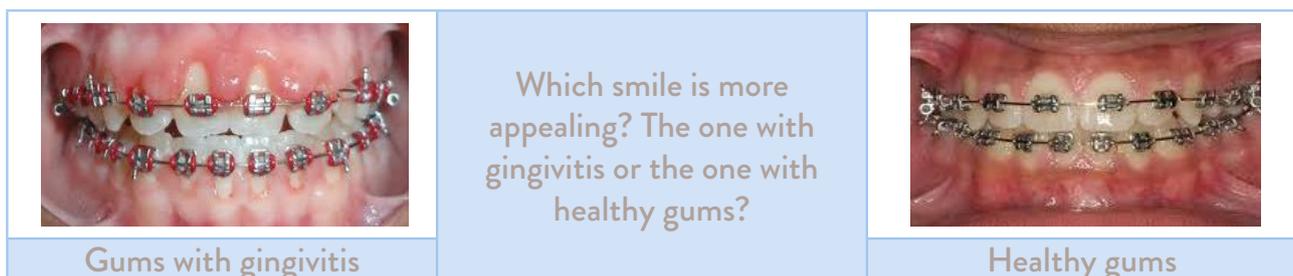
Brushing

Now you have braces you should brush three times each day. We recommend a longer brush morning and night (3 minutes), and a quick brush after lunch. A small soft toothbrush and interdental brush are ideal for cleaning with braces. Interdental toothbrushes are an excellent addition to your teeth cleaning toolkit. They are ideal for effective removal of plaque from under the archwire and in between brackets.

Take care to brush carefully around the brackets and near the gum line. If plaque accumulates around your braces it can leave permanent stains or marks on your teeth called decalcification. These marks remain on your teeth for life! If you look at the middle image below, you will see a marked difference between these teeth and the teeth to the right. The teeth in the middle image are affected by decalcification and the teeth on the right are healthy and strong.



If you don't take time to brush properly, the accumulation of plaque can also result in gingivitis. Gingivitis is inflammation of the gums. It can cause red, puffy gums that bleed when you brush. If this occurs, you need to improve your brushing technique. Brush gently and thoroughly along the gum line and continue to brush even if bleeding occurs. If you require assistance to learn better brushing techniques, be sure to ask us at your next appointment.



Flossing

Flossing with braces on is possible and necessary. Yes, it takes a little longer than flossing without braces, but it is extremely important, as brushing alone will not remove all the plaque and food from around your braces. Although flossing with braces is tricky at first, with practice, you'll very quickly refine your technique. For best results:

- Use waxed floss (it slides more easily and is less likely to shred in braces) or Oral B Superfloss. Products like flossettes are not recommended.
- Use enough floss – about a ruler length (30 cm).
- Thread floss carefully under the archwire of braces before passing it between two teeth. Floss down just under the gum line.
- Remove the floss and pass it under the archwire again, between the next two teeth.
- Be careful not to pull the floss up or down too hard as you may injure your gums or break the archwire.

It is recommended parents assist younger children with flossing, noting particularly the requirement to thread floss under the archwire.

Eating with braces

During braces treatment it is recommended sweet, sugary, sticky and hard foods are avoided. These foods increase the chance of decalcification and decay. They can also cause problems with braces, including breakages. Some foods should be avoided altogether and while the list below is by no means comprehensive, it will give you a few ideas about what to stay away from:

- Any hard, chewy lollies, such as Minties, Fantales, Redskins, Chewy Caramels, toffees, lollipops, popcorn, and nuts.
- Ice – Rather than crunching ice, suck it instead.
- Meat on bones, fruit on stones, and corn on the cob. Cut first and then eat it in bite-sized pieces.
- Hard foods – Rather than biting into hard foods, such as apples and carrots, cut them up and chew with back teeth.
- Biting fingernails – Surprisingly, biting on fingernails can also break brackets. If this is a habit you've been trying break, commencing braces treatment is the perfect time to give it up!

When it comes to food, the best guideline to follow is: If you think it's too hard or sticky, it probably is!



For further information regarding appliance care, please refer to the Resources section of our website at <https://www.menaiortho.com.au/> or call us on (02) 9543 3680.