

## Braces

### Post Op Instructions

We do everything we can to keep our patients happy during their orthodontic treatment. There are four things that we ask our patients to do to keep themselves happy.

1. **Brush and Floss!** This is so important. Brushing and flossing can mean the difference between a great orthodontic result and a poor one. We do not want you to have a poor one. After all the time and effort that will be going into your braces, you probably do not want a poor one either. If you need to see pictures of poor hygiene, let us know, they are pretty awful. You do not want YOUR teeth to end up like that. Keeping your teeth and braces clean will allow you to upgrade your beginning grey O-rings to the color of your choice.
2. **Keep Your Appointments!** If you miss a lot of appointments, guess what? You will be in braces longer than you have to be. Also, if you miss appointments without calling us to let us know, you may end up still getting charged.

It is very important that Dr. Johnston sees you on a regular scheduled basis. If not properly monitored, braces can cause problems that can possibly cause you to have braces longer than expected.

3. **Follow Instructions!** It is very important to do what Dr. Johnston and his staff tell you to do. Following their instructions will allow you to keep your treatment time on schedule. Not doing what you are asked to do will extend your treatment time.
4. **Be Patient!** All treatment times that we have talked about are only estimates. Everyone is different and everyone's teeth move at different rates. Your teeth will "look done" to you long before they really are. The part of the tooth that you see moves faster than the root, which you do not see. If you take the braces off before the root has moved, guess what? The tooth will move right back to where the root wants it. Remember that Dr. Johnston is trained to see many things about our teeth that the rest of us do not. He will not keep you in braces any longer than he must, but at the same time, he does not want to let you out of them before you are totally done. He takes your teeth seriously.

## Spacers

Simply stated, spacers create space. Eventually, you will have a couple of bands around your back teeth, and right now, there is probably no room to put those bands. Spacers are little rubber bands that separate those back teeth from the rest of your teeth, just enough to place a band around them.

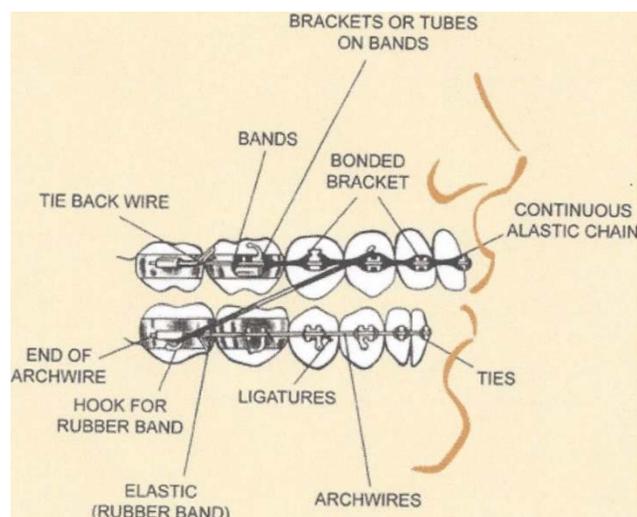
You may be getting spacers today, or you may be getting them the next time you come in. They may be a little uncomfortable but taking Ibuprofen or some kind of pain reliever either before the appointment or as soon as possible afterward should help.

## Rubber Bands/Elastics

When and if Dr. Johnston tells you to wear your rubber bands, just wear them. Why? First, if you do not wear them, you are going to be “stuck” in braces for much longer than planned. Second, Dr. Johnston is going to know. He can tell if you have been wearing them, no matter what you might try to tell him. *Rubber bands are a GOOD SIGN!* They mean you are getting closer to the end of your treatment, so do not stop now!

## Parts of Your Braces

Here is a diagram of everything that will be in your mouth for the next couple of years. It is important to learn a few basics so that if something does break or come loose, you can tell us what it is. Some things can wait and some cannot. If you know exactly what it is that is broken or loose, we can tell you if you need to come in right away or not.



## **You, Your Braces, and Food**

We know you are worried about this, but rest assured, you will not starve. It will be difficult to eat for a few days, but you will get used to your braces pretty quickly and be eating normally soon.

Have soft food on hand for the day you get your braces on. Things like soup, yogurt, pudding, mashed potatoes, macaroni & cheese, and scrambled eggs will help you get through those first few days.

### **Next, there are things you MUST AVOID with braces:**

1. Gum of any kind (even sugarless)
2. Sticky, chewy, and hard candy of any kind (like Skittles, Now and Laters, Gummi Bears, Caramels, and Tootsie Rolls)
3. Foods that are really hard (like nuts, some taco chips, some bagels, and the hard-outer edge of pizza crusts)
4. Corn on the cob, just cut the corn off the cob and you will be ok.
5. Pure, non-diluted lemon juice. Lemon in your iced tea or on your fish is ok, but do not eat raw lemons. The pure lemon juice can eat away at the enamel on the surface of your tooth.
6. Chewing on ice

*Thank you for choosing us for your dental needs. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office at 334-687-0088*