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How to Care for Your Orthodontic Appliances:

Now that you have your braces, you must learn how to care for them properly.

For the first few days, your teeth will be sore. An over-the-counter pain medication will ease discomfort.

It is not uncommon for your new braces to irritate your cheeks and gums. If a wire is irritating you, try to press it gently back into place. If that does not help, use the orthodontic wax that has been given to you. Roll it between your fingers into a small ball and place it directly on the wire or braces where needed. Rinsing with warm salt water 2 – 3 times a day will help. If the irritation persists, call our office.

It's very important to brush and floss regularly while wearing braces. If your gums are not healthy, you will notice that they will become swollen and bleed easily with brushing. Brush after every meal and before bedtime and floss every day. If you aren't able to brush after a snack, rinse your mouth with water. We'll help you with instructions on how to brush and floss. Also, brush fluoride onto your teeth once a day. It is available by prescription from the doctor.

It's very important that you visit your dentist for regular check-ups while wearing braces. Some patients may need to visit their dentist every 3 months if poor oral hygiene is an issue. Orthodontic treatment does not take the place of regular check-ups and cleaning.

Types of foods and habits to avoid:

- **Sticky/Chewy Foods:** Taffy, Starburst, Skittles, Airheads, and caramels can pull your braces off.
- **Hard/Crunchy Foods:** Popcorn, ice, nuts, hard candy, chips, and taco shells can break your braces.
- **Chewing on Hard Objects:** Biting on pencils, pens, or fingernails can also damage your braces.
- **Take Extra Care With:** Sugar-free gum, apples, carrots, corn on the cob, pizza crust, bagels, and sub sandwiches. Always cut up raw fruits and vegetables and chew with the back teeth.

Call us if a bracket breaks before your next appointment. This is not an emergency unless it hurts.
REMEMBER: Every broken bracket or bent wire can mean another month of braces!