

Welcome To Our Guide About Looking After Your Teeth Whilst Wearing Braces

Created by the Oral Health Care Educator Team

Royal Bournemouth Hospital & Dorset County Hospital Merged Orthodontic Services in April 2025

The merging of the two Orthodontic services enabled patients to continue having access to treatment over the whole of DORSET.

All information and letter heads will have the Dorset County Hospital Logo.

Please ensure you check your letter to ensure you arrive at the correct hospital.



University Hospitals Dorset
NHS Foundation Trust



Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

What You Will Learn



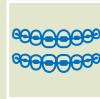
First steps for getting started with brace treatment



How to clean your teeth and braces



Maintaining a healthy "Brace Friendly" Diet



What types of braces there are



How to maintain your braces



Oral health products and other helpful products

Q: Why do I Need to Visit my Dentist While in Brace Treatment?

Please chase an appointment if
you have not heard from your
dentist recently

They regularly check
your teeth and gum
health



Steps To Getting Started With Brace Treatment

What to expect at your records
and consent appointment

Records and Consent Appointment



Photographs: Form part of your Dental Records at the start of your treatment



Intra-oral scans and/or impressions: Form images of your teeth and gums. To be stored on your Dental Records which are used to confirm treatment plans



Consent: To discuss your treatment plan including which types of brace you will need, answering questions and **your parent or legal guardian** to sign the consent to treatment form.

Dental Photographs



A Mirror is used
to take photos
inside your mouth

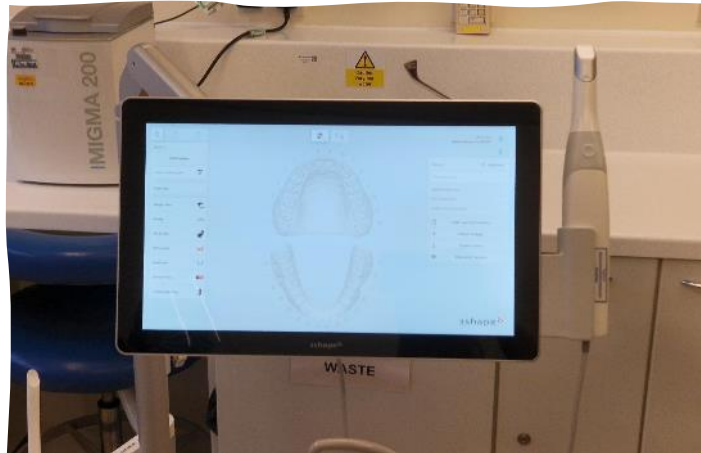
The cheek retractors
are used to hold your
lips and cheek away
from your teeth



This is an example of the
photographs taken in your mouth



Intra-Oral Scan



The camera takes 1,000s of photos of your teeth to build an image on the screen, the scan takes about 10 minutes to complete and create the finished image.

The Intra-Oral Scanner



Photos Building up an Image of Your Mouth on the Screen



Impressions

1



We choose a tray to fit your mouth

2



The tray is filled with a dental paste which sets quickly

3



This is an impression of your top and bottom teeth

4



The impressions can be used to make your models and appliances

Oral Hygiene

Including tooth brushing

Good Oral Hygiene



Brushing your teeth and gums will remove the plaque in your mouth.

This will maintain healthy teeth and the gums which will be firm, pink and not bleed whilst brushing.

What is plaque?

Plaque is a sticky, colourless film of bacteria, food and sugars that forms constantly on our teeth throughout the day.

Toothbrushing Guidance

- Brushing 3 times daily
- Brush for 3 minutes or the length of a song
- Use a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste
- Always look in the mirror while brushing

After Brushing

- Spit out the toothpaste, but do Not rinse
Rinsing washes away the fluoride, which helps protect teeth.

Toothbrushing Technique

Using a Manual Toothbrush

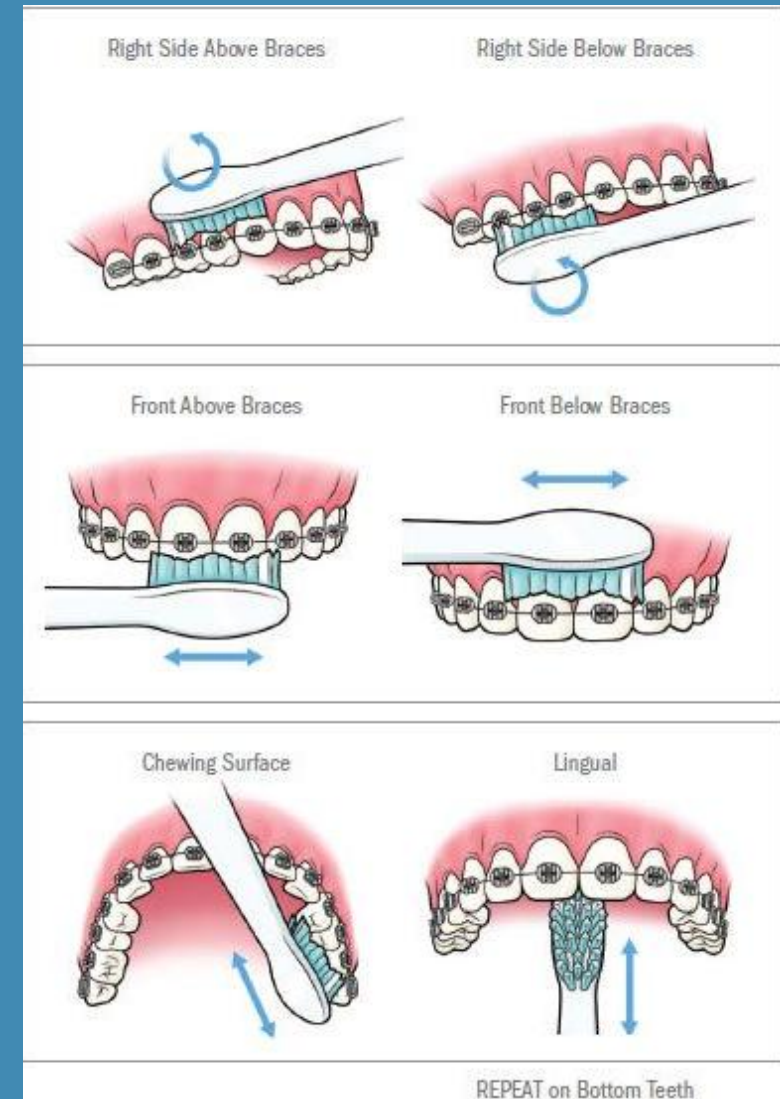
- Use small circular movements and/or gentle back and forth motions
- Apply gentle pressure
- Keep the bristle pointing towards the gums
- DO NOT use a scrubbing motion

Using an Electric Toothbrush

- Hold the toothbrush on each tooth, angled towards the gumline
- Allow the brush to do the work
- DO NOT scrub

Brush all tooth surfaces including

- Outer (front) surface
- Inner (back) surface
- Chewing surface



Intra-Oral Cleaning

Interdental Brush



Interdental Brushes or interspace brushes are used to clean around the brackets & under the wire.

Interdental cleaning around the brace must be done every time you brush your teeth.

Interspace Brush



Disclosing Tablets

Plaque is colourless and disclosing tablets help you to see it, so that you can remove it.

Use Disclosing tablets every week to check your brushing technique is good.

Disclosing tablets are a vegetable dye. The dye will also stain your lips, and cheeks when the tablet is chewed, you can use Vaseline on your lips before use.



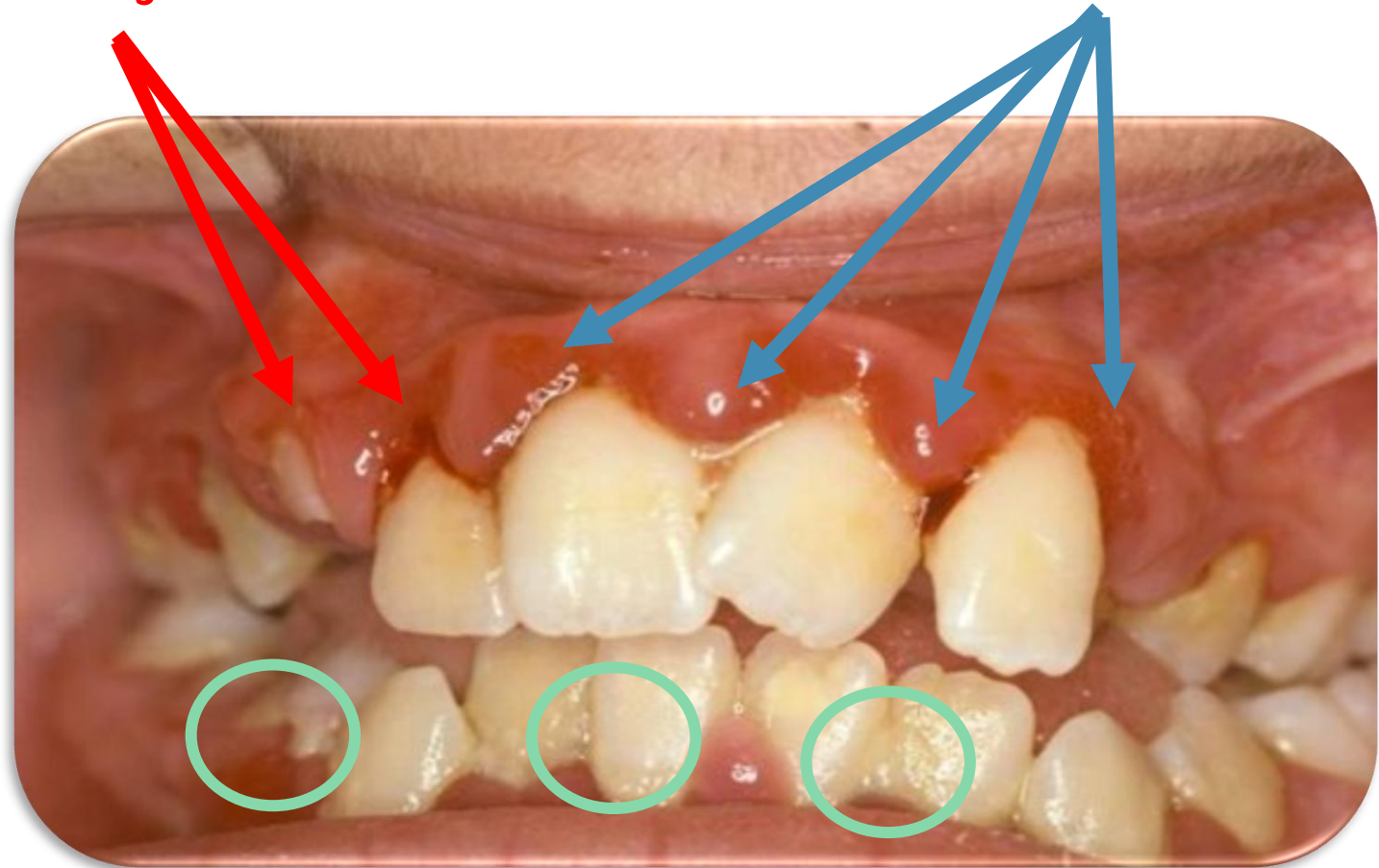
Poor Oral Hygiene

If we do not brush our teeth and gums properly to remove plaque, the gums become red, swollen and bleed easily.

Brushing 3 times a day when your brace is fitted will prevent this happening.

Bleeding Gums

Red Swollen & Inflamed Gums



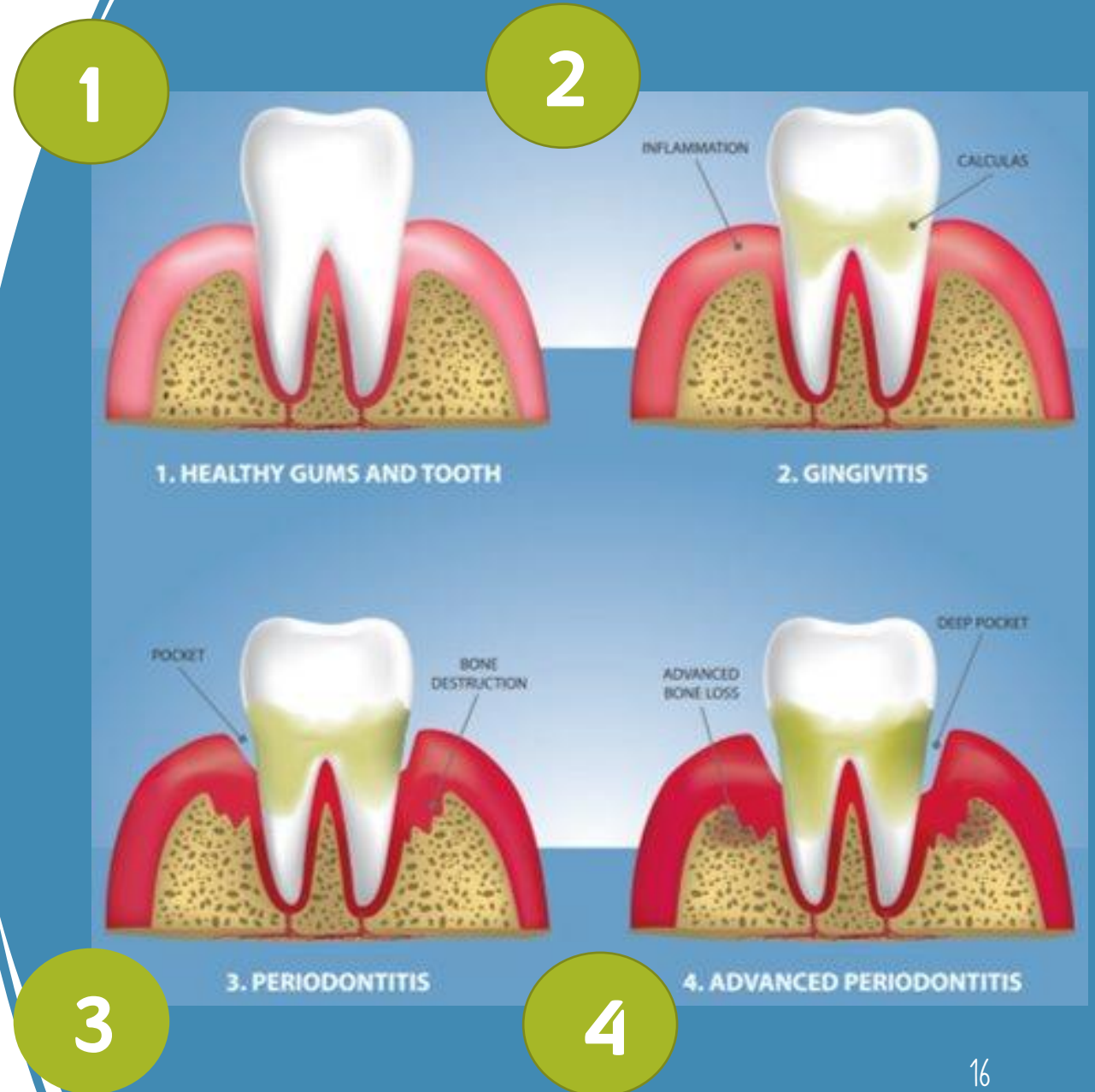
Plaque Building up where the tooth meets the Gums

Stages of Gum Disease

Stage 1: Healthy gums

Stage 2: Gingivitis is where the gums become red, swollen, inflamed and bleeds when brushing. This is a reversible stage with good toothbrushing.

Stage 3 and Stage 4: is what we want to prevent. Gum and bone loss is irreversible.



Consequences Of Poor Oral Hygiene and Diet

White Marks are the start of tooth decay and brown marks are the next stage which is permanent damage to the teeth



Diet During Brace Treatment

Brace Unfriendly and Brace Friendly Diet

Brace Unfriendly Food And Drink



Hard, Sticky,
Chewy and high
sugar content
foods



Fruit bars, cereal bars &
dried fruit are high in
sugar



All Fizzy Drinks
even no added
sugar types



Frequent
drinking of Fruit
Juice & Sugary
drinks



Flavoured or
Carbonated Fizzy
Water

These types of foods should be limited and preferably eaten at a mealtime due to the high sugar content. Hard, sticky, or chewy foods should be avoided. Fizzy drinks, including sugar free and fizzy water have high levels of acid and should be limited to an occasional treat and drunk through a straw.

The Balance of Acids in Saliva

When we eat, the bacteria in our mouth when combined with the sugar in all foods produces acid.

By reducing snacks between meals this will lower the risk of the acid being harmful to your teeth and help prevent decay

Bacteria in Plaque + Sugar = Acid = Decay (holes)

Brace Friendly Foods



Plain still water & fresh milk

Cheese

Natural yoghurt, sugar-free or low sugar

Tea/Coffee with no sugar added

Fresh meat /Chicken (Cut into small pieces)



Types of Removable Braces

If you need a removable brace this will be discussed with you at your records appointment. All patients will be provided with retainers at the end of your treatment.



Removable Brace

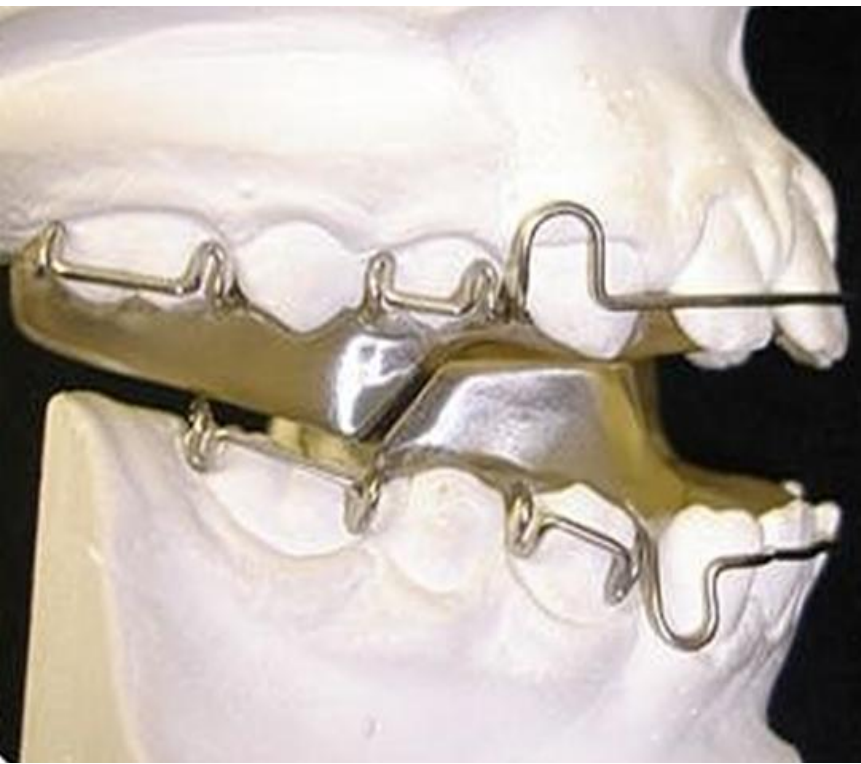
Acrylic covering the palate with clips and cribs to hold in place

May feel sore or uncomfortable for the first few days

A Simple appliance used to tilt or hold space open for teeth to erupt into

Must be worn ALL the time, only removing for tooth brushing, contact sports and swimming





Functional Braces

Acrylic covering the palate with clips and cribs to hold in place

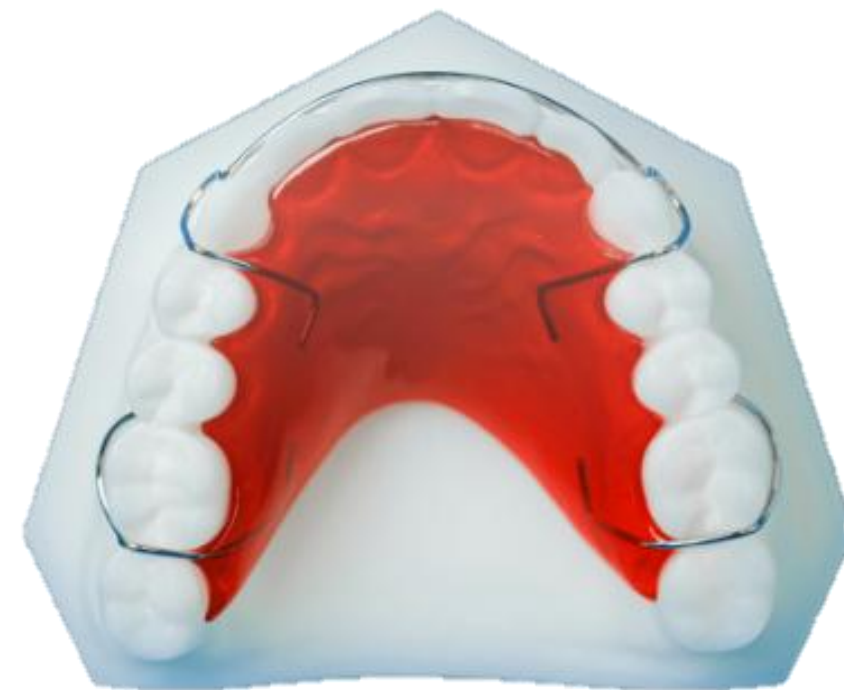
May feel sore or uncomfortable for the first few days

Moves jaws into different positions, which improves profile

Works best during puberty (while still growing taller)

Must be worn ALL the time, only removing for tooth brushing, sport and swimming





Retainers

Retainers help to keep your teeth straight after brace treatment. They must be worn every night as a long-term commitment.



We will provide you with a box to keep your retainers safe.

If you require replacement retainers, there may be a charge for this service.

There are different types of retainers. This will be discussed with you when your brace is removed.



Brace should be cleaned
after every meal, at
least 3 times a day

Using a separate
toothbrush and non
perfumed soap

Optional, weekly soak in
Retainer Brite for a
deeper clean

Summary of Removable Appliances



RETAINER?
WHAT
MAKES YOU
THINK IT
WAS ME?

Replacement braces if lost or broken will incur a charge

Braces need to be worn as instructed

Keep the brace safe in the box

Clean brace and teeth after every meal

Fixed Braces

Fixed braces are made up of 3 components, the bracket, arch wire and elastics. All 3 components must be attached to each other and the tooth for the brace to function correctly and efficiently

Fixed Braces

1

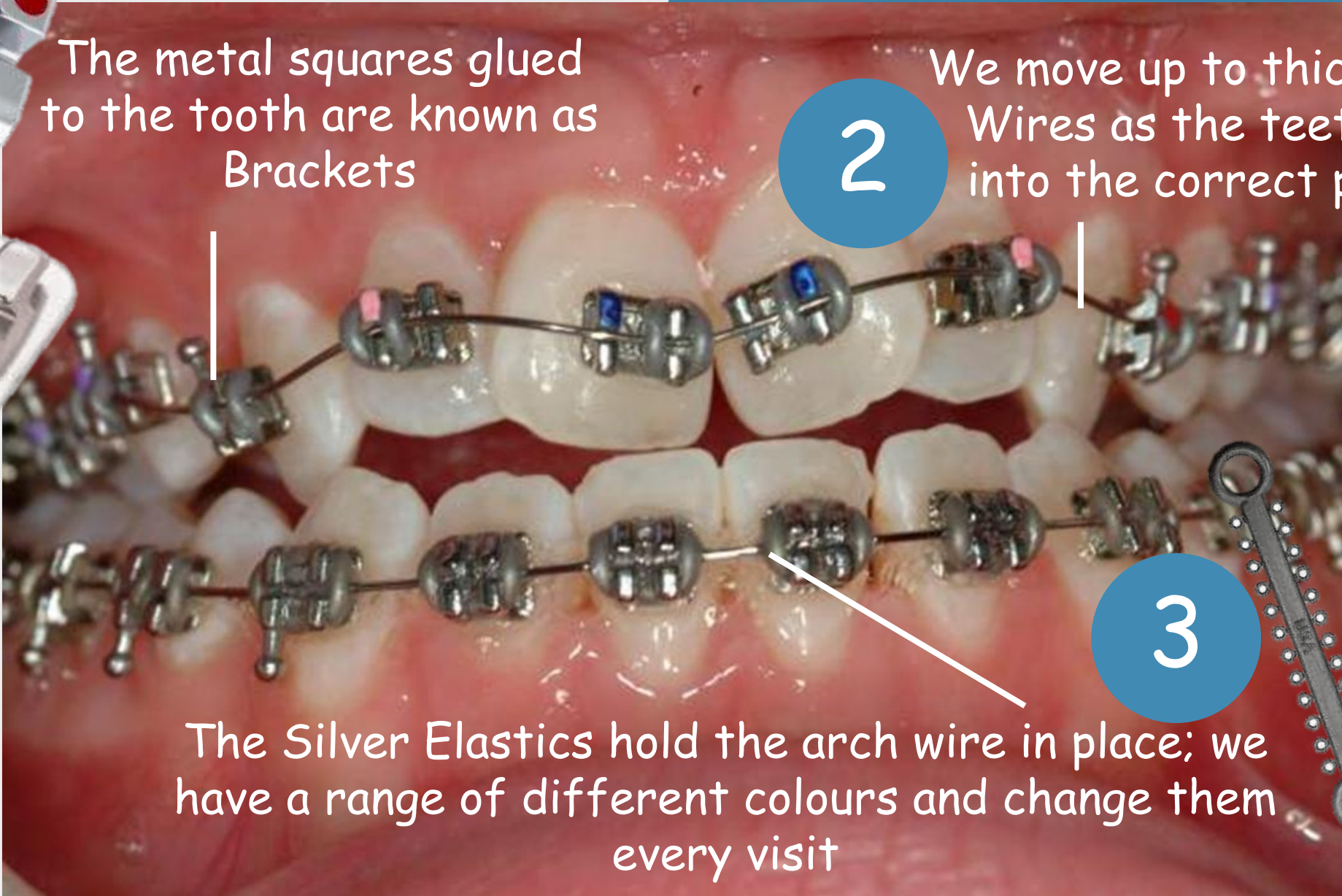
The metal squares glued to the tooth are known as Brackets

2

We move up to thicker Arch Wires as the teeth move into the correct position

3

The Silver Elastic hold the arch wire in place; we have a range of different colours and change them every visit



Fitting Fixed Braces

1



Polish, wash and dry your teeth

2



Place a cheek retractor in your mouth and a little suction tube to keep everything nice and dry

3



Use a blue light to set the glue on the brackets
Then place the arch wire

4



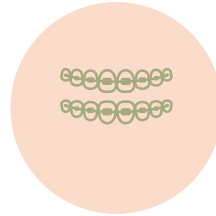
Place the colour elastic bands to hold the brackets and the arch wire together

The appointment is about 1 hour to fit the braces; it is not painful or uncomfortable. Your teeth may feel sore a few hours later, stick to soft food for the first few days and you may need to take a painkiller

Caring For Fixed Braces



Soft diet &
avoid certain foods



Please make an appointment as soon as possible to repair your brace



Avoid biting fingernails &
chewing pens



After fixed appliance is fitted there may be some discomfort & painkillers maybe needed



Fixed appliance may rub,
wax can be applied



Gum shields can be purchased



Bands

Bands require 2 or 3 appointments for palatal Arches, Quad Helix or RME



Separators are placed between the teeth to create space for the bands



Bands are selected and attached to the teeth with dental cement



A scan or impression is taken with the bands in place for the appliance to be made.



Fixed Braces & What to Expect



Palatal Arch

Anchors the molars in place, to preserve space.



Quad Helix

The appliance is used to slightly expand the arch, to improve posterior crossbites.

To create room for crowded teeth.



Rapid Maxillary Expansion

The appliance is used to expand the palate where the bone has yet to fuse.

The appliances are cemented to the teeth, often requiring a few initial appointments for separators and fitting

Food can get stuck in the loops, requiring thorough rinsing, using an interdental brush to clean around wires.

Soreness and difficulty eating soft foods like bread are common initially.

Regular orthodontist visits are needed, and loose bands must be fixed promptly.

1

Removing Fixed Braces



2

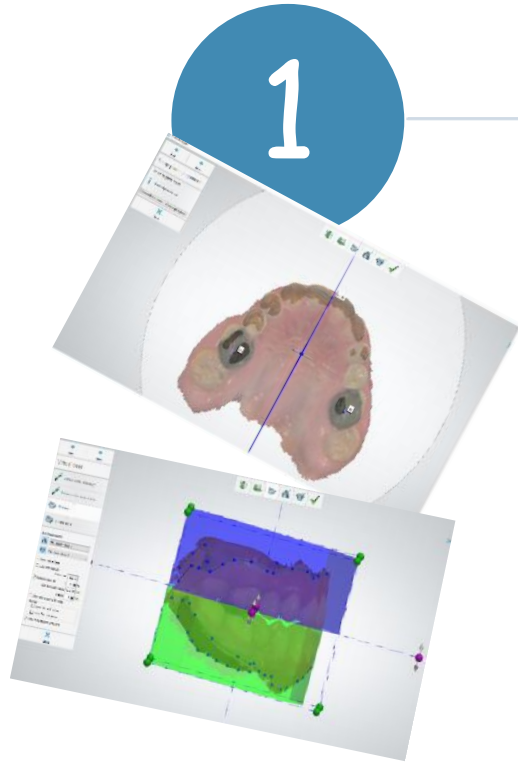


3



4

Making Your Retainer



Scanned image sent
to lab to prepare
for print



Printed on 3D printer



Models are ready to
be worked on



Our on-site lab
staff can now make
your retainers

Oral Health Products

Gum shields and the guide
summary



Oral Health Products

- Small head/medium texture toothbrush
- Interspace brush
- Travel toothbrush
- Disclosing tablets
- Fluoride mouthwash
- Orthodontic wax

You can purchase Oral Health products from the Dental Reception Desk

Gum Shields

Are available to protect your teeth during brace treatment

Opro



Precision Fit



Summary

- Reduced snacks between meals
- Avoid hard, sticky, chewy foods
- Sweets, chocolate or fizzy drinks should be enjoyed as a treat at a mealtime
- Drink still water between meals
- Brush 3 times a day
- Use disclosing tablets once a week
- Use daily fluoride mouthwash at a different time to tooth brushing
- Avoid pen and fingernail chewing
- Treatment will take 2 to 3 year's
- Appointments are Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm
- Visit your own dentist regularly