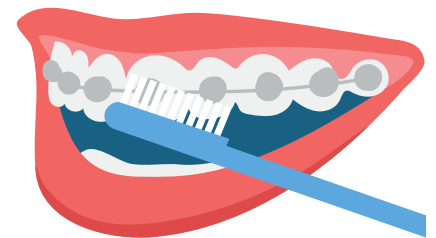


Handling Orthodontic Issues at Home

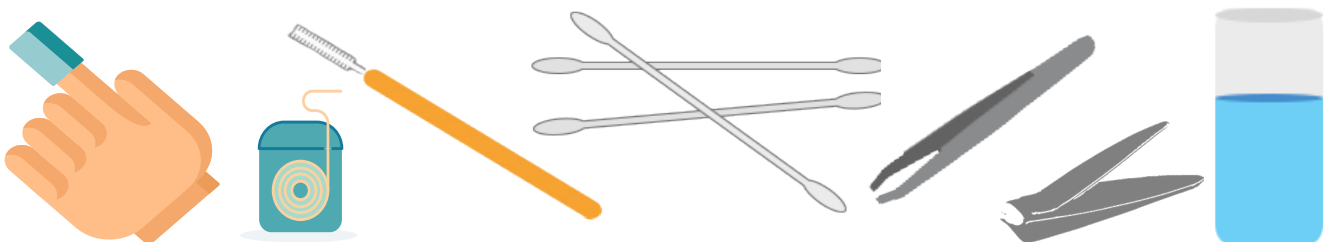
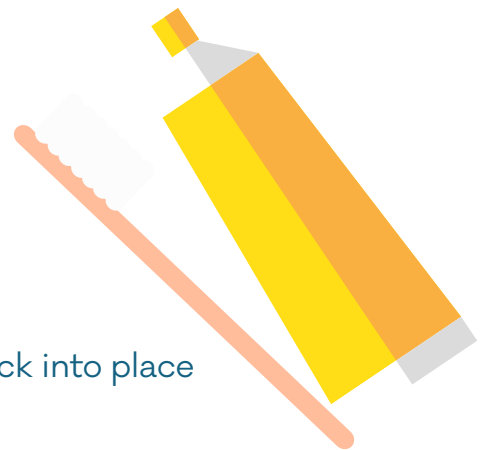
While there are steps you can take to alleviate discomfort or temporarily fix orthodontic issues to avoid further damage, your first step should always be to notify your orthodontist. They will be able to advise you on what to do and will be able to give you expert advice to ensure your treatment stays on track. They should be able to assist you over the phone or through video calls.

Your orthodontic care kit

Maintain good oral hygiene by brushing, flossing and rinsing your mouth with water as you regularly would and avoiding problematic food and drinks while in isolation. In addition, it is helpful to have the following tools and supplies on hand to support your orthodontic needs as required:



1. **Orthodontic wax** and **non-prescription pain relievers**
To ease discomfort and irritation
2. **Floss, picksters** or **interdental brushes**
To support your oral health
3. **Clean tweezers** and **cotton buds**
In case you need to push wires into place
4. **Small nail clippers** or **cuticle cutters**
To cut a poking archwire which can't be pushed back into place
5. **Salt warm water mouthwash**
To disinfect ulcers and ease discomfort



Tips for handling orthodontic issues at home

The following advice can assist you in most common orthodontic issues. Please contact your orthodontist to let them know of any damage to your appliance and to seek their advice as soon as possible. Always use clean hands and disinfected tools when attempting to temporarily fix these issues.

Lost O-Ring

An 'O-ring' is the small rubber band or sometimes a very thin wire (ligature) that holds the archwire in place within the bracket. If a rubber o-ring comes off, you should be able to put it back in place using disinfected tweezers. If a wire ligature comes loose, simply remove it with the tweezers. However, if the wire ligature is sticking out but is not loose, use your tweezers or a cotton bud to bend it back into place to reduce the irritation.

Protruding wire

Occasionally, the end of a wire may work itself out of place and can irritate the mouth. Using a clean cotton bud or disinfected tweezers, you can try to push the wire so that it sits flat on the tooth. If you're unable to do this, you can use small nail clippers to carefully cut the end of the wire. Make sure you let your orthodontist know about any changes to your wire.

Mouth sores

Some patients may be susceptible to mouth sores which can be exacerbated by irritation from braces. While it is not an emergency, if you do experience ulcers it can be very uncomfortable. A small amount of topical oral anaesthetic (available from most pharmacies) applied to the surface with a cotton bud may offer some relief. If the discomfort does not resolve within a couple of days, please contact your orthodontist to discuss.

Loose braces, brackets or bands

If the braces or brackets come loose in any way, it is best to contact your orthodontist immediately to determine the next steps.

Irritation

Occasionally, you may find that your braces and brackets can cause some minor irritation in the mouth, particularly when eating as the metal rubs against the mouth. Use orthodontic wax to cover the brackets that are causing this irritation. Simply break off a small amount of orthodontic wax and roll it into a small pea-sized ball. Flatten the ball, dry the area and place it completely over bracket or wire causing irritation. When your orthodontist is closed, you should be able to purchase orthodontic wax from more pharmacies.

Discomfort and pain

While it's normal to experience some discomfort during orthodontic treatment as your teeth move, the pain should not be unbearable or last more than a couple of days. Rinsing your mouth with warm salt water and taking non-prescription pain relievers may alleviate most discomfort. If discomfort lasts more than a couple of days please call your orthodontist to discuss.

Lost or broken aligners or retainers

It is always important to consistently wear your aligners during your treatment and to continue wearing your retainers after your treatment is complete. In the event that replacement retainers are required, please contact your orthodontist by phone or email so that they can provide you with advice on how to proceed.

Keep your orthodontist's contact details handy so you can ask their advice in any situations you find yourself in.