

HAPPY
VALENTINE'S
DAY!



YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN

Reprinted by:
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Hello Wild Cubs and Wild Cats,

As always, I would like to thank all of my Wild Cat and Wild Cub friends who keep sending me emails. I love hearing from each and every one of you.

I hate to brag, but my Wild Cat and Wild Cub friends often comment on my beautiful, straight, and white teeth. When I was a younger wild cat, I had braces. In case you are thinking about getting braces, below are some tips on how to take care of them.

I want to send out an extra special Happy Valentine's Day to all of my wild cub and wild cat friends. Email your friend Wally Cat at wally.cat@uky.edu to let me know if you did anything special for your friends or family on Valentine's Day.

Wally Cat



Tips for taking care of your braces

Brushing and Flossing:

Brush and floss the teeth after every meal and before going to bed. Brushing and flossing is especially important when you have braces because food can get caught in the braces and cause cavities.

Brushing might hurt the first week after braces are put on. Usually, after the first week, brushing should be fine. Other tools like dental water jet cleaners or electric and

sonic toothbrushes work great. Flossing is a little harder. There are special brushes and floss designed to clean around the braces.

It is easy for food to get caught and hide on your teeth with braces. Regular trips to the dentist for cleaning is very important.

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Avoid Certain Foods:

- Ice, nuts, caramels
- Taco chips
- Hard candy, licorice, chewing gum and gummy candies (only sugar free allowed)
- Carrots, apples, and raw vegetables (unless cut in small pieces)

Will my braces interfere with playing musical instruments?

People who play woodwind or brass instruments, such as the clarinet or trumpet, will require some minor adaptation to braces. With some practice and an easy period of adjustment, braces typically do not interfere with playing musical instruments.

Are there any activities that a person should avoid when wearing braces?

Most orthodontists advise against patients participating in activities where there will be many blows to the mouth. Sports like boxing and wrestling should be avoided. Fighting should also be avoided. Wear an orthodontic mouth guard whenever participating in any sporting activity.

Do braces hurt?

There is some discomfort and soreness when the braces are first put in, and when the braces are being tightened. However, after the first week, most people hardly notice the braces at all.

Space maintainer:

In addition to biting and chewing, primary (baby) teeth are very important because they hold space for the permanent teeth. When a primary tooth is lost prematurely, an orthodontic space maintainer is placed in the mouth to hold the space necessary for the permanent teeth that will come in later. Space retainers are applied before braces are installed to prepare the teeth.

Rubber bands:

Rubber bands are used to move teeth forward or back in the mouth.

For example, they could be used to move lower teeth forward or back, to move a tooth that is in the wrong place, or to close a gap between the teeth. It's important to wear the bands as prescribed and change them every day so the force is constant. A lack of consistency in wearing rubber bands can bring treatment to a standstill.

Headgear:

Headgear applies selective pressure to the upper teeth and upper jaw to guide the rate and direction of upper jaw growth and upper tooth eruption. The headgear may be removed and is usually worn only at night but it is sometimes necessary to wear it in the day as well.

Retainers:

The objective of a retainer is to keep teeth in perfect alignment after braces are removed. Usually, when braces are first removed, the teeth will all be in perfect alignment, but many times gums or bones will not have completely shifted into their new positions. The retainer holds the teeth in position until gums or bones settle into their new positions. Generally, patients are advised to keep wearing a retainer 24 hours a day for at least a week after braces are removed. It is recommended to continue to wear a retainer every night.



SOURCES:

- Source: UK College of Dentistry Office of Oral Resources International
- Adapted from the December 2006 HEEL Health Bulletin

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