

Fixed Braces (Train Tracks)

Information for patients



Fixed braces (“train tracks”) can be used to straighten crooked teeth like these:



This leaflet gives you some information about fixed braces and how to get the best results from them.

Are train tracks uncomfortable?

You are likely to have some discomfort for the first few days after the braces are fitted, then the discomfort will usually disappear. Some people have more discomfort than others, but this can be controlled with painkillers such as paracetamol. The teeth may also feel slightly loose. This is nothing to worry about.

Can I take the braces out?

No, the braces are fixed to your teeth and will remain on for the duration of your treatment. Do not try to remove it as you may damage your teeth or cause yourself severe pain. If you feel you need to have your brace removed, get in contact with us straight away.

What about eating?

You can eat most normal foods, but you need to be careful about eating very hard, very tough or very sticky foods, because these can knock a bracket off or break a wire.

You need to avoid fizzy juices and drinks as these contain a very strong acid that dissolves the enamel of the teeth – **this includes DIET drinks, as these contain just as much acid.**

Fruit juices should also be avoided. The only completely safe drinks are tea, coffee, water and milk.

For hard foods, cut these up into small pieces first before eating them.

How can I keep my teeth clean?

Brush your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste as you usually do. You need to spend more time as there are more places where bugs and germs can collect and cause tooth decay and gum disease.

If you allow plaque to collect on your teeth this may result in white spot “scarring” of the enamel of the teeth. This is the first sign of tooth decay. We will monitor your oral hygiene and let you know if you need to improve your tooth brushing.

How long will I need to wear fixed braces?

Depending on the complexity of the problem, usually 24-30 months for most people is usual. Some cases (where jaw surgery or restorative treatment is involved) may take longer. Ensure you attend all your appointments as if you miss one, it may be some weeks before we can schedule you a new one.

Do I need to wear any other appliances?

You may need to wear elastic bands between the top teeth and the lower teeth to refine the bite. These may need to be worn full time or part-time. Another thing that may be needed is headgear (which is usually worn at night), or possibly we may need to use temporary anchorage devices (TADs).

This picture shows a patient wearing elastics:



What happens when the braces come off?

When the treatment is finished, we remove the braces ("debond") and we will then provide you with a retainer, which is a removable plastic appliance that you wear normally at night.

We will monitor your retainer for up to 6 months after debond and then we will discharge you to your family dentist. You will need to make your own arrangements to have any retainers replaced after this and there may be a charge involved.

How often do I attend for treatment?

Normally we will need to see you every 6-8 weeks to adjust the braces.

What about appointments at my general dentist?

You need to see your general dentist regularly to ensure no tooth decay or gum disease is taking place.

How do I protect my teeth for sports?

A mouthguard is advisable if you take part in any sports where you might damage your teeth.

Emergencies and breakages

See the leaflet on "Orthodontic Emergencies".

Playing musical wind instruments

You should be able to continue this but if you have any concerns, your music teacher should be able to advise you.

Missed Appointments

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please contact us.

Multiple missed appointments may result in discharge from our care, and you may experience harm from your braces. A missed appointment costs NHS Lothian approximately £200.

