

# Functional Braces

## Information for patients

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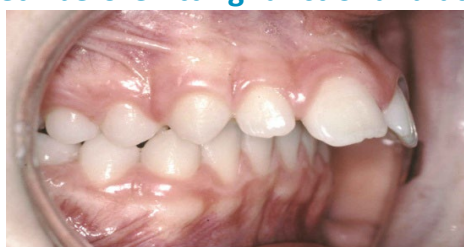
### What is a functional brace?

A functional brace is one that works on getting the upper and lower front teeth to meet correctly. It is mostly used where the upper front teeth stick out in front of the lower teeth. It is removable for cleaning, sports etc, but the more it is worn the quicker it will work.

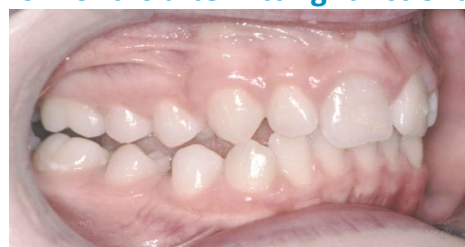
### How many hours a day do I need to wear the brace?

Ideally you should wear it 24 hours a day (including in bed at night) but for some patients this may not be possible. However, constant wear will produce quicker results. You should take it out for eating and cleaning your teeth.

#### Teeth before fitting functional brace:



#### Teeth 6 months after fitting functional brace:



### Is it likely to be uncomfortable?

When the brace is first fitted, it may cause the joint and the associated muscles at the side of the face to be tender for a few days. This will pass if you persist with the braces. You may need to take painkillers initially (such as paracetamol). If the pain persists, ring us for an emergency appointment and we will see you in a day or two to adjust the brace. Try to keep it in your mouth if possible, as this may result in us having to do only a minor adjustment. Don't leave it out for several days or weeks as it may not fit afterwards.

### What other effects might happen?

Your speech will be different and it may take a little time to get used to this. This will get better with time. Try reading aloud when you get home and eventually your lips and tongue will adapt to the braces.

### What about eating?

If you can eat with the brace in place successfully, continue to do so. If not, take it out and put it in the protective box. Remember to rinse it before you replace it in your mouth.

Avoid eating very tough, hard or sticky food as this might damage the brace. Remember also to avoid fizzy juices and diet drinks as these contain acids that damage the teeth.

Remember that plaque causes tooth decay and may result in white spots on your teeth – these are the first signs of tooth decay.

## How often do I need to brush my teeth?

Brush at least three times a day with a fluoride toothpaste, and rinse well afterwards. You should also try using a fluoride mouthrinse at least once a day.

## Can I take the brace out of my mouth?

The functional brace is removable but you need to wear it as much as possible. Take it out for sports or any other activity where it might be knocked out of your mouth. Keep it safe in the protective box. Clean it thoroughly once a day with soapy water (avoid toothpaste as this will tend to scratch the surface of the braces).



**This picture shows a twinblock brace in place:**

## How long will I have to wear the brace?

The simple answer is: the more you wear it, the quicker it will work!

Wearing the brace all the time will result in faster results. The average time that it is worn is around 6-9 months. If no change takes place then we will have to consider some other course of treatment.

## How often will I need the brace checked?

Normally every 6-8 weeks, but this depends on the individual case.

## Will I have to see my own dentist?

Yes – your general (family) dentist will need to see you for a check-up regularly to see that you are not having any problems such as tooth decay or gum disease. If the orthodontist sees any decay or other problems, they will refer you to your dentist for this to be treated.

## What about sporting activities?

Take the brace(s) out and replace it with a gumshield for the duration of your game or sporting activity. Keep the brace in a protective box. Re-insert the brace once you have finished your sport.

## What about breakages or other emergencies?

If it breaks which stops you from wearing the brace then you need to contact us for an emergency appointment at your convenience. We run emergency clinic on set days.

If it breaks but you are still able to wear the brace then please keep wearing until your next normal appointment.

## 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.

### A few dos and don'ts:

**Do remember to clean your brace at least once a day.** Clean it well with a toothbrush and some soapy water (avoid toothpaste as this tends to scratch the surface).

**Do remember to see your own general (family) dentist on a regular basis** during your orthodontic treatment. We may see cavities in your teeth but we cannot fill them – your dentist will do this.

**Do take your brace out for sports and keep it safe** in the little protective box that we will give you.

**Don't use very hot or boiling water** to clean your brace – it may distort the plastic and may not fit your teeth afterwards.

**Don't wrap it in tissue paper** - it may be mistaken for rubbish and get thrown away!

**Don't leave your brace where cats or dogs can damage them.**

**Don't keep the brace in your pocket or loose in rucksacks, bags** etc – it will be damaged and may not fit your teeth afterwards.

