



PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR BRACE REMOVAL

As the removal of your orthodontic appliances is approaching, there is a series of appointments we would like to explain for your information. The purpose of these appointments is to determine what additional tooth movement is necessary prior to brace removal (debond) and **then** to accomplish these goals. **Please read this somewhat lengthy handout entirely so that you will understand the sequence of events that will occur during the finishing and retention phase of your treatment.**

The number of necessary appointments differs from patient to patient. Often we are able to remove orthodontic appliances slightly earlier than planned because of the possibility of correcting the remaining minor discrepancies in the dental arches using elastics and a positioner appliance.

You would usually NOT want to schedule the braces off appointment shortly before going out of town (such as a family trip, summer camp, etc). In that case, it is best to keep the braces on until after the patient returns from their trip.

1) Positioner Impressions. The first appointment in the debonding sequence will be for the taking of positioner impressions. In addition, a wax bite will be taken to orient the upper and lower dental casts. One or two progress x-rays also may be needed. Adjustments in the braces and wires are then made for additional tooth movement.

The impressions will be poured in plaster and then the doctors will evaluate these models to determine what additional tooth movement may be needed prior to brace removal. When it is determined that brace removal is imminent, these models are sent to a dental laboratory. The laboratory technician will carve the impressions of the braces off the teeth, and then the teeth will be cut out of the dental cast and set in an ideal position. The positioner, which looks somewhat like a mouth guard, is actually a high-precision appliance.

2) Once the additional tooth movement has been achieved (which may occur in one to several appointments) an appointment will be scheduled for one of the following procedures:

A) Serpentine Wires: If the seating of the bite has been achieved, the doctor may choose to place “serpentine” wires. In this option, the posterior bands and the arch wires are removed and a ligature wire is braided around the braces in a serpentine manner, connecting the remaining braces. The patient also may need to wear some elastics if some limited seating is required.

B) Spaghetti Elastics: If additional seating of the bite is needed (the top teeth to have full contact with the bottom teeth to aid in function and stability), you will be instructed to wear a number of vertical elastics that we call "spaghetti" elastics. The purpose of these elastics is to move the teeth into a more precise location so that an ideal orthodontic result can be achieved. In order for these elastics to work properly, they must be worn exactly as directed, nearly full-time. The only time these elastics should be out of your mouth is when you are eating or brushing your teeth. Following tooth brushing, the elastics must be replaced exactly as in the following diagram.

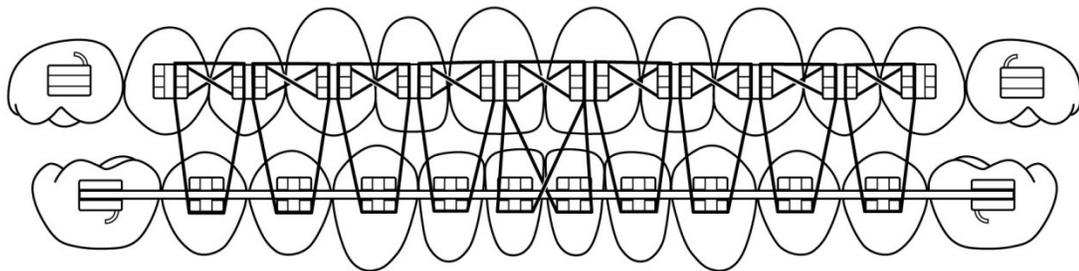
The doctor makes the decision of “serpentine” verses “spaghetti” based on what is in the best interest of the patient to achieve the best possible orthodontic result.

If “spaghetti” elastics are needed, you may experience some initial discomfort and some tooth soreness usually is experienced during the first few days of elastic wear, but the symptoms should be lessened significantly through the taking of *Advil*, *Aleve*, aspirin or *Tylenol*. In contrast to what you might think, wearing elastics on a full-time basis actually decreases rather than increases discomfort.

Although you can talk quite freely while wearing these elastics, you may find it more comfortable to keep your teeth together as much as possible while wearing the elastics. Doing so eliminates much of the discomfort involved and allows the teeth to assume an ideal position.

Your teeth may appear to become more mobile during elastic wear. This feeling is common and does reflect some temporary increased mobility of the teeth as they move into a new position.

Spaghetti Elastics diagram



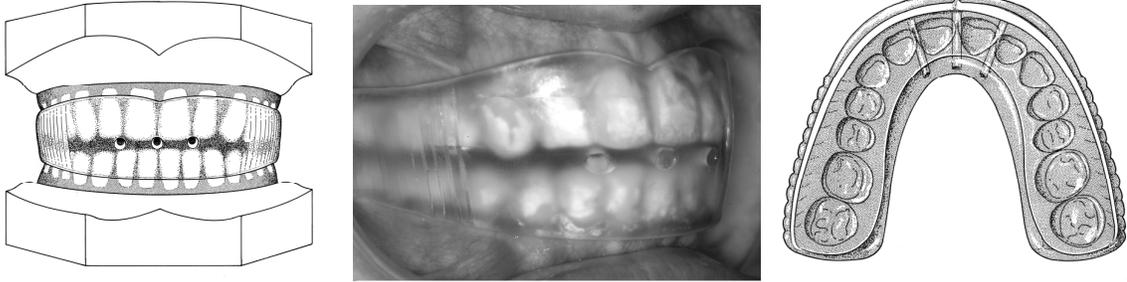
3) Appliance Removal. Usually 7-10 days later, your appliances will be removed. This procedure usually is not painful. The total time needed for this appointment is approximately one hour. You may bring in appropriate music of your choice on a CD to be played throughout the clinic during your appointment. In addition, at this time we will ask you for any suggestions you have to improve our office.

It will be necessary for you to visit your general dentist after appliance removal for a thorough cleaning and check-up within the next few months. If you are due for a cleaning and check-up just prior to debonding, it is wise to postpone the appointment until after your braces are removed.

At the time of appliance removal, you will be given a positioner appliance (see following pictures). The purpose of the positioner is to provide the final detailing of your teeth in the best way possible. In addition, the positioner helps close the small spaces between your posterior teeth that will be present when the bands are removed. The positioner also will help reduce any enlarged gingival (gum) tissue.

A positioner should not be used in patients who have a history of jaw joint (TMJ) problems, such as clicking, popping, jaw locking, or joint pain. Please notify us if you currently have such problems or have had any such problems in the past.

Views of the positioner appliance



The schedule for positioner wear is as follows:

- **FULL-TIME WEAR** (22-24 hours) for the first day (except when eating and brushing). Full-time wear is essential for maximum benefit.
- For the next few weeks, wear the positioner as much as possible. The more you wear it, the faster it will work and the sooner we can discontinue this appliance. **MINIMUM DAYTIME WEAR SHOULD TOTAL FOUR HOURS**, plus sleeping hours. The four hours during the day can be all at once, or in increments as small as 20 minutes.

For the first few nights, you may find it difficult to keep the positioner in your mouth the entire night. Within a few nights, however, it should be much easier to wear it while sleeping. Please note: Daytime wear is *much more effective* than wear during sleep; thus it is critical that the patient wear the positioner as directed.

It is essential that you bite into the positioner gently throughout the day as directed. Biting into the positioner will allow for the maximum effect on the teeth. Daytime wear is approximately eight times as effective as wear during sleep time.

4) Post-treatment Records. You will then be seen two to four weeks after the braces are removed to check on your positioner wear. At this time, we will take the post-treatment records that document your treatment result. The doctor will determine at this appointment how much more positioner wear is required. If the positioner has been worn as directed and the teeth are in their proper position, we will take impressions at this visit for your retainers.

5) Retainers. At this next visit, you will be seen at our office for either delivery of upper and lower retainers, or impressions for these retainers, depending on what was done at the last visit. We commonly use the Invisible (clear plastic) retainers.



< *Invisible retainers* are made of a 1 mm thick clear acrylic that formed to the dental cast. Before making the retainer, it is possible to reset individual teeth 1-2 millimeters to finalize an ideal occlusion (bite). This is the type of retainer used most frequently in our office.

The retainers are delivered approximately two weeks after the impressions are taken. **FULL TIME WEAR IS REQUIRED for one year, except when eating or brushing.** Since the dental cast is damaged in the process of making an appliance, new impressions must be taken should replacement become necessary. There is an additional charge for lost or damaged retainers.

NOTE: This phase of your orthodontic treatment requires maximal patient cooperation and can mean the difference between a good result and an excellent result. If at any time you cannot wear your positioner or retainers, please contact our office immediately!

