

Functional Appliances

Now that you have a functional brace you may have some question you would like answered.

➤ What is a functional appliance?

A functional appliance is a removable brace that works on the upper and lower teeth at the same time.

➤ How much do I need to wear the brace?

The number of hours per day that you are expected to wear the brace will be explained to you. For the treatment to work it is important you follow these instructions. With the correct number of hours of wear you may find the improvement in the position of your teeth can be quite dramatic.

➤ Will it be painful?

It is likely to be sore for about 3-5 days each time the brace is adjusted. If necessary, painkillers such as the ones you would normally take for a headache, may help (please read the instructions on the packet). If there is an obvious area of soreness as a result of the brace, ring for an appointment as soon as possible. If possible, do not stop wearing the brace or else you will have to through the 3-5 days of discomfort all over again when you start wearing it once more.

➤ How else may it affect me?

Your speech will be different. Practice speaking with the brace in place e.g. read out aloud at home on your own, and in this way your speech will return to normal within a couple of days. You may also find yourself swallowing a lot to begin with. This is quite normal and will quickly pass.

➤ Can I eat normally?

You may not be able to eat with your functional appliance in place. You will be advised about this. If you have been told to take it out for eating, make sure it is placed in a tough plastic box for safekeeping. A suitable box will be recommended to you. For your orthodontic treatment to work well and in the shortest possible time it is important

you take care of your teeth and brace. In order to prevent damage to both, you should

- Avoid eating toffees, boiled sweets, sugared chewing gum, chocolate bars, etc.
- Avoid drinking fizzy drinks including diet drinks and excessive amounts of fruit juice.

➤ What about tooth brushing?

It is important you brush well three times per day and use a fluoride toothpaste. If possible carry a brush with you for use after lunch. Take the brace out to clean your teeth. You should also gently brush the brace, taking care not to damage the wires. A daily fluoride mouth rinse should be used last thing at night, after toothbrushing. Failure to keep your brace and teeth clean will lead to permanent scarring of your teeth.

➤ Can I remove my brace?

The brace you are now wearing is removable but should only be removed for cleaning, unless you are otherwise advised. When it is not in your mouth it should be in its protective box. Do not click the brace in and out with your tongue as this will break the wires and increase the length of time the treatment will take.

➤ How long will treatment take?

This can vary according to how severe your case is. Most of the work with this brace is usually completed in about 9-12 months. You may then have to wear the brace at nights for a while or you may progress to a second phase of treatment with a different type of brace. You will be advised about this, failed and cancelled appointments or repeated breakages of the brace will add to the overall treatment time.

➤ How often will I need an appointment?

You will need regular appointments during treatment for the brace to be adjusted.

➤ Do I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. It will be important you still have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment so that your teeth can be checked for decay.

➤ **What do I do if I play contact sports?**

You should wear a gum shield instead of your functional appliance when you play contact sports. This will also be the case if you enjoy riding a bicycle, roller-skating or skateboarding. When not in your mouth the brace should be in a protective box.

➤ **What do I do if my brace breaks?**

Ring up for an appointment as soon as it reasonably possible. Do not wait for your next routine appointment as the breakage may slow your treatment, or may result in damage to your teeth. If you repeatedly break your brace treatment may be stopped.