

LIMITED ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

Orthodontics is the specialty of dentistry that uses devices and appliances to move and straighten teeth. “Limited” treatment means that tooth movements are targeted to a specific problem or region of the mouth. Limited treatment at the University of Washington is targeted to take six months or less.

For treatment to be successful, we need your help and understanding. Good home care of your teeth and appliances and regular appointments are the key to the best outcome. Life with your orthodontic appliances will not be that different, but you do need to take some special precautions.

- Teeth move at a slow, steady rate. To efficiently complete the desired movements you need to **wear your appliance as directed** and we need to see you every **2-6 weeks**.
- Braces and bands are bonded to teeth with special orthodontic cements. The cements are strong, but are designed for removal without lasting damage to your teeth. Orthodontic wires can be delicate and easily bent or distorted. You must be careful not to do things to damage your appliances.
 - **Avoid eating hard and crunchy foods** like ice, popcorn, nuts, hard candy, or chips
 - **Avoid very sticky or chewy foods** like gum, caramel, or taffy
 - **Raw fruits or vegetables** are good for your body, but can damage your appliances. Cut up apples, pears, and carrots before you eat them and remove corn from the cob.
 - **Do not chew on foreign objects** like pencils, toothpicks, or fingernails
- Having orthodontic appliances in your mouth can make it more difficult to clean your teeth and gums. It is very important that you do a very good job cleaning to ensure your teeth and gums stay healthy.
 - **Brush your teeth for 2-3 minutes at least twice per day.** Be sure to brush above and below your braces and massage your gums with the brush. You can use a interproximal or end-tufted brush to help brush below your braces.
 - **Use fluoridated toothpaste and/or fluoride rinse.**
 - **Flossing is an important step in keeping gums healthy.** Use floss threaders to help you floss at least once per day.
 - If you have a **removable appliance**, take it out and brush it clean when you brush your teeth. Never put retainers or appliances in hot or boiling water.
- **Cut down on sugary foods and carbonated soft drinks.** Try to limit snacking outside of meals. Drinking soda and consuming other sugary things can result in cavities and white enamel “scars.”
- **Your appliances may irritate your lips and tongue and your teeth may be sore.** Some adjustment to your new braces will be necessary. You can reduce your discomfort by using over-the-counter pain medications and placing soft wax over irritating parts of your braces.