



Sutton Orthodontic Centre
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Patient Information Leaflet Functional Appliances

What is a functional appliance?

They are a type of removable brace and work on the upper and lower teeth at the same time.

How much do I need to wear this brace?

They only work when worn full time. That means day and night. Detailed instructions will be given to you when the appliance is fitted. If worn as instructed the improvement in your teeth and face can be very dramatic.

Is it painful?

Having the brace fitted is not painful but it is common to have slightly tender teeth for 3-5 days after fitting and each adjustment appointment. If necessary, simple painkillers may help (i.e. Paracetamol or Ibuprofen). Please ensure you follow the instructions on the packet.

How else will it affect me?

Your speech will be different. Practice speaking with the brace in (read out aloud at home) and your speech will return to normal within a few days. You may also need to swallow a lot more to begin with. This is normal and will quickly pass.

Can I eat normally?

You might not be able to eat with the brace in place. For your treatment to work quickly and well it is essential that you look after your teeth and your brace. You should:

- Avoid eating toffees, boiled sweets, sugared chewing gum, hard or chewy chocolate bars, etc.
- Avoid fizzy drinks and excessive amounts of fruit juice.

What about toothbrushing?

You should brush your teeth 3 times a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Pay particular attention to where the gums meet the teeth. Take the brace out to clean your teeth and gently brush the brace, taking care not to damage the wires.

A daily fluoride mouthrinse should also be used last thing at night, after toothbrushing, to further protect your teeth. If you do not keep your teeth and brace clean you may find there is permanent scarring of your teeth.

Can I remove the brace?

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

How long will it take?

Depending on severity, most cases take 9-12 months to complete. You may need to wear the brace at nights for a while after the active phase is complete. It is also sometimes necessary to proceed to a second phase of treatment with a different type of brace. Your orthodontist will advise you about these possibilities.

What do I do if my brace breaks?

Ring up the practice for an emergency appointment as soon as is reasonably possible. Do not wait until your next routine appointment as this may slow down treatment. If you repeatedly break your brace treatment may be stopped.

How often will I need to be seen?

You will need regular visits during treatment for the brace to be adjusted. You may be charged for missed appointments.

Will I still be able to play contact sports?

Yes, but you should wear a gumshield instead of the functional appliance during these activities. This includes riding a bike, roller skating or skateboarding, etc. When not in your mouth the brace should be in a hard protective box.

Do I still need my regular dentist?

Yes. You must continue to have regular check-ups throughout orthodontic treatment.