

THE HARLEY STREET ORAL
RECONSTRUCTION CENTRE

What's the best way to care for orthodontic appliances and protective bite guards?

Removable appliances require proper care to keep them clean, free from stains and looking their best. Keeping your appliances clean ensures that your teeth will be healthier. Use your orthodontic appliance or bite guard as your dentist has described to you. The aftercare is equally important to follow so as to prolong the usefulness of the appliance. By following the complete instructions it should stay in shape longer.

- **Remove and rinse the appliances after wearing.** Run warm water over your appliance to remove any debris and other loose particles. You may want to place a towel on the counter or in the sink or put some water in the sink so the appliance won't break if you drop it.
- **Clean your mouth after removing your appliance.** Use a soft-bristled toothbrush on natural teeth and gauze or a soft toothbrush to clean your tongue, cheeks and roof of your mouth (palate).
- **Brush the appliance with a toothbrush.** After rinsing, give your appliance a light brushing with your normal toothbrush. Some people prefer using a separate toothbrush just for their night guard, but it's okay if you want to use the one you use on your teeth. You don't need to apply toothpaste to the brush. Toothpaste can be abrasive, it may scratch your appliance and cause it to accumulate debris and bacteria more quickly.
- **It is important to allow your appliance to dry completely before storage.** This will prevent rapid bacterial growth, bad odour and stain formation. Choose a clean, flat surface to allow your appliance to dry. Typically it should dry within 15-30 minutes.
- **Always store your appliance in a case.** When you are not wearing your appliance it is important that you keep it stored in a case. Many people store it in the bathroom, but over time the steam and humidity can cause the appliance to warp. We recommend that you keep the appliance stored in your bedroom or on your nightstand away from direct light or heat.
- **Deep clean your appliance weekly.** Make a habit of deep cleaning your appliance at least once a week. This can be done several ways. The first is by an over-the-counter denture cleaner from your pharmacy. The second way is to use a mixture of mouthwash and water using a 50:50 ratio. Soak for about 30 minutes completely submerged and allow it to dry thoroughly on a clean flat surface. (Note: never leave your guard to soak for longer than 1 hour).
- **Rinse the appliances thoroughly before putting them back in your mouth, especially if using a denture-soaking solution.** These solutions can contain harmful chemicals that cause vomiting, pain or burns if swallowed.

- **Keep your case clean.** Cleaning your night appliance becomes a wasted exercise if you place it back into storage in a dirty case. Clean your case every second day with dishwashing detergent and not into the dishwasher where it would melt! Again allow the case to fully dry out to stop bacterial growth.
- **Bring your appliance to your dental appointments.** This will give us the opportunity to inspect your appliance for signs of wear and we can assess whether it still fits you properly.

You typically should avoid:

- **Abrasive cleaning materials.** Avoid stiff-bristled brushes, strong cleansers and harsh toothpaste, as these are too abrasive and can damage your appliances.
- **Bleach-containing products.** Don't use any bleaching products because these can weaken the material and change their colour.
- **Hot water.** Avoid hot or boiling water that could warp your appliance.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.