

## SOLVING ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCE PROBLEMS

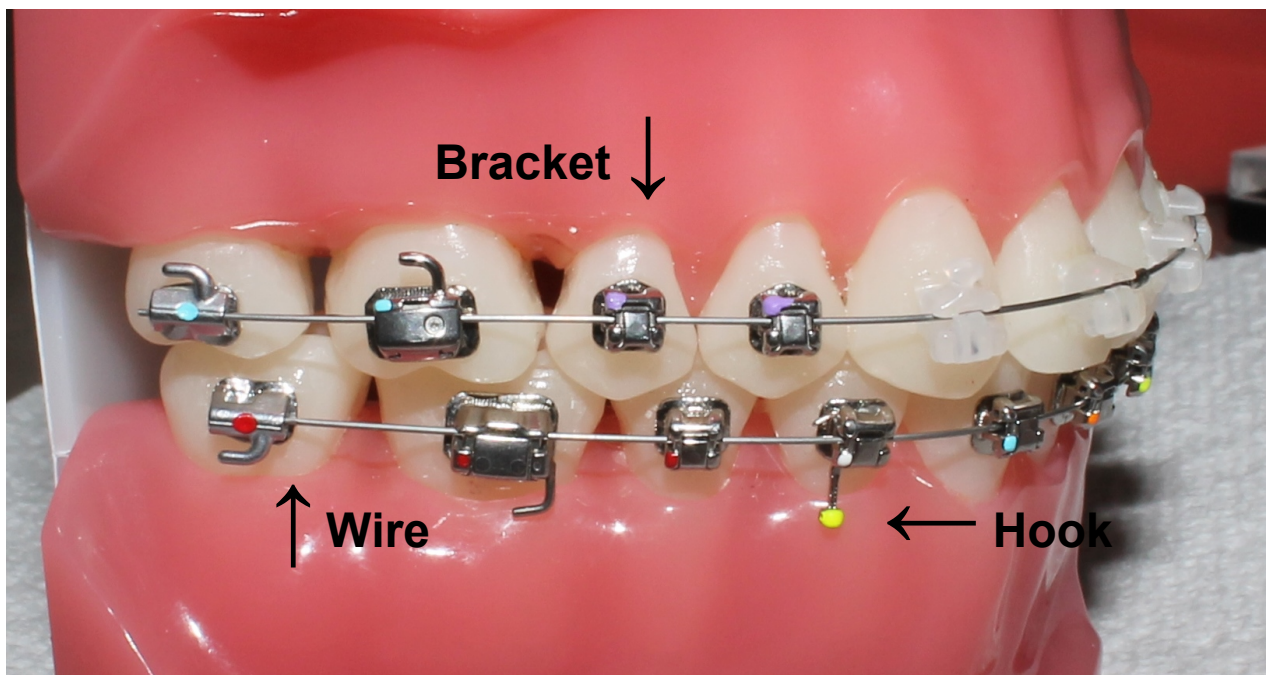
Occasionally your orthodontic appliances (braces, expander, etc.) may break or begin to “poke” your gum tissue. 99% of appliance breakage can be prevented simply by being careful of what you eat. YOU SHOULD AVOID EATING HARD OR STICKY FOODS WHILE YOU HAVE APPLIANCES OR BRACES.

**NOTE:** If you are ever in severe discomfort due to appliance breakage, you need to call us that day so we can help you. Please understand that we will not always be able to schedule an after school appointment for an emergency visit.

**AFTER HOURS OR WEEKEND PAGES** If an emergency occurs and you need to call us during non-business hours, please call between 9am and 9pm. You will receive a pager number or doctor’s cell phone number to call from our answering machine. If the problem occurs after 9pm, please call us the next morning. Our families thank you for your cooperation. If a major trauma to the teeth has occurred in which the teeth are “knocked” out of position or extreme pain occurs, please disregard the previous time guidelines.

**TIME AND ORTHODONTICS** In the world of orthodontics time goes much more slowly than in the “regular” world. Very soon, orthodontically speaking, means within one or two days. Soon means within two to five days. Unless a major trauma occurs, most emergencies can wait at least twelve to twenty four hours (depending on the time of day) before they should be attended to. It is important to keep a perspective of what an orthodontic emergency means. No one has ever died from a loose band or a missing spring. We will attend to your emergency based upon what has happened and how much discomfort you are in. If you think you are having an emergency please call the office.

**REMEMBER:** Breakage of orthodontic appliances/braces = having your braces on for longer than originally estimated. As stated, 99% of breakage is avoidable simply by being careful of what you eat.



## PROBLEMS WITH AN EXPANDER

If you have an appliance attached to bands that comes loose, do not remove the appliance from your mouth. You should also stop turning the expansion screw and contact our office during regular office hours to schedule an emergency appointment. If you are not able to keep the appliance in, bring it with you to your emergency appointment. Again, if you feel the situation is an emergency or cannot wait until the following business day please contact us via our emergency numbers.

## BRACKET PROBLEMS

**Loose brackets** (a brace glued onto the front or side of a tooth). This is generally not a serious problem, unless you are going to get your braces off soon. The bracket will generally stay attached to the wire. It may slide around a little, but that is okay. **There is no need to call us after hours or on the weekend for a loose bracket. If the bracket is causing discomfort, we will schedule you for a brief emergency appointment during office hours to remove it. Always notify us when a bracket is loose or comes off so that we may schedule more time to your appointment.**

**Poking bracket** Place wax over the uncomfortable bracket. Be sure to dry the area first so the wax will stay on better. There is no need for you to schedule an emergency appointment unless the bracket is causing SEVERE pain.

## SEPARATOR PROBLEM

**Separator is out** If a separator (spacer) falls out a day or two before you are scheduled to receive your bands (silver ring around a molar) you do not need to have it replaced. If it falls out before then, call our office during regular business hours to schedule a quick appointment a few days before you receive your bands to replace the missing separator.

## BAND PROBLEM

**Loose band** (silver ring around a molar) Contact the office during normal business hours to schedule an emergency appointment. A loose band needs to be re-cemented soon (within 1-2 days) after it becomes loose. If it happens over the weekend, call us on Monday morning to schedule an emergency appointment.

## PROBLEMS WITH BRACES

**Elastic Tie off / or Steel tie loose or off** **A missing elastic tie is not a problem unless your appointment is more than two weeks away.** If more than two weeks away, call for a short emergency appointment. If you look closely at your bracket and see a steel tie on it, it is okay.

**Chain elastic broken or off** Call our office during regular business hours for a short emergency appointment. This should be fixed within a few days after it occurs. If it happens over a weekend, call our office Monday morning.

**Poking steel tie** This is a problem which you can fix yourself. Take a pencil eraser and gently “push” the steel tie toward the tooth surface until it is no longer poking you. Place wax over the area if necessary.

**Loose or missing rubber band hook** Patient can try to hook rubberband around bracket until a brief emergency appointment can be made. If not, discontinue wearing your rubber bands. Call our office during business hours to schedule a brief emergency visit.

**Poking archwire** Place wax on the affected area and call us during business hours to schedule an emergency appointment. If the wire cannot be covered with wax and continues to poke the patient in the gums or cheek, the wire can be cut. Please call the emergency number for further instructions.

**Broken archwire** Call our office during regular hours to schedule an emergency visit. If it happens over the weekend, call on Monday morning.

**If you lose your rubber bands** Call our office during business hours so we may have them ready for you to pick up. If you can't make it before we close, we can arrange to leave them outside for you. For our "long distance" patients, we can mail them to you.

**If you can't remember how to wear your rubber bands** Call our office during regular hours and someone will pull your chart, verify your rubber band wear, and return your call.

## RETAINER PROBLEMS

**Lost or broken retainer** Call our office during regular hours (or if on a weekend, call Monday) to schedule an appointment to make an impression. **The sooner you come for an appointment, the less the teeth will shift around.** Your new retainer will be charged to you at regular rates. And will be delivered to your in 1-2 weeks.

**Retainer not fitting correctly** Call our office to schedule an adjustment appointment. **NOTE: The primary reason retainers make your teeth sore is because you are not wearing them often enough. If your retainer feels tight for more than five minutes after you put it in, you need to wear it more often.**

## REMEDIES FOR DISCOMFORT

Wax acts like a Band Aid® for your mouth. By placing a small amount of wax over the bracket (or whatever is irritating your tissue) it "guards" against further discomfort. Be sure to dry the area off before you place the wax over it to help the wax stick much better. Sometimes a bit of cotton mixed with the wax will help it stay in place better. Flatten the wax and add the cotton strands, fold the wax over like a taco and apply to the irritating spot (we call this a wax taco).

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is the best pain reliever for sore teeth. There are many brands on the market, use whichever you feel most comfortable with. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for dosage and warnings. If you are unable to take Acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen is the next best thing.