

Brace Yourself for Adult Orthodontics



Each year, over four million people—many of them adults—are fitted for braces. If you have any of the following dental problems, you may be a likely candidate for braces.

- Crowded or crooked teeth.
- Buckteeth, misaligned teeth, or lower teeth that protrude.
- Poor bite or wide spaces between teeth.

It takes about two years for braces to realign teeth. In the meantime, you can avoid damage to the braces and decrease the risk of tooth decay and gum disease by practicing the following:

- Don't chew gum.
- Don't eat nuts or sticky candy or bite down hard on candy or ice.
- Don't bite into whole apples, pears, or other crunchy fruit. Instead, cut them into bite-size pieces. Don't eat corn from the cob.
- After eating, brush your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste. Some orthodontists also recommend cleaning your teeth with a water irrigation appliance after you brush.
- To guard against decay, rinse your mouth daily with a fluoride mouthwash.
- If sores develop in your mouth, or if your gums become red or swollen or bleed easily, contact your orthodontist for advice.
- If a wire from the braces becomes loose, don't try to repair it yourself. See your orthodontist.