



Common Orthodontic Situations

A - Ligature Tie

Tiny coloured elastics that hold the archwire to the brackets/braces

B - Archwire

The wire that joins all of the brackets and moves the teeth

C - Brackets / Braces

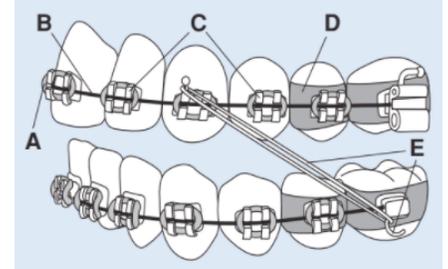
Brackets or braces are directly bonded (glued) to the teeth or connected to a band, and hold the archwire in place

D - Metal Band

A ring of metal which wraps around the tooth, on which a brace is attached

E - Elastic Hooks / Rubber Bands

Elastic hooks are used for the attachment of rubber bands, which help move teeth toward their final position



The following orthodontic problems can easily be addressed at home. Certain situations may require attention from the office, in which case please call us to schedule a repair appointment. It is normal to have discomfort for several days after braces are placed and after braces are adjusted. It can make eating uncomfortable and you may want to eat softer foods. The discomfort is both normal and temporary. Taking a pain reliever such as Advil/Tylenol will help ease the discomfort.

Irritation of Lips or Cheeks

Sometimes new braces can be irritating to the mouth. A small amount of relief wax makes an excellent buffer between metal and mouth. To use: pinch off a piece and roll it into a pea-sized ball, flatten it, and squish it completely around the brace or wire causing irritation. Wax should be removed and discarded before brushing or eating, though it is harmless if it is accidentally ingested.

Ligatures Come Off

The tiny coloured elastics (ligatures) hold the wire to the brackets. If an elastic comes off you can discard it and it can be replaced at your next scheduled visit. If the archwire is coming away from the brace, call the office to schedule an appointment to have it replaced.

Protruding Wire

Occasionally, the end of a wire will move out of place and irritate your mouth. Relief wax should be used to provide comfort to the irritated area. If the wire is extremely bothersome and you are not able to come to the office, you may clip the protruding wire as a last resort with a pair of sharp clippers. If the wire is causing extreme discomfort, please call the office to schedule an appointment.

Loose Brackets, Wires or Bands

Brackets/braces are attached to teeth with a special adhesive. If the bracket is moving, the adhesive bond has been broken. The bracket can be knocked off if you have eaten hard or crunchy foods, or if your mouth is struck while at play. (You are encouraged to wear a protective mouth guard while playing sports.) It can be repaired at your next scheduled appointment. If it is causing discomfort you may call to schedule an additional visit to have it repaired.

Mouth Sores

Some people are susceptible to mouth sores. While braces do not cause them, the sores can be precipitated or exacerbated by an irritation from braces. One or several areas of uncomfortable ulceration of the cheeks, lips or tongue may appear. Prompt relief may be achieved by applying a small amount of topical anesthetic (e.g. Orabase, Ora-Gel) directly to the ulcerated surface using a cotton swab. A salt water rinse can also help, or adding relief wax to cushion the irritated area.