



## You and Dr. Miller are now a team!

Both of you want the same result...a beautiful smile with healthy, white, straight teeth.

Dr. Miller will straighten your teeth, but you are responsible for keeping them healthy and white; that means brushing. Now that you have braces, proper brushing will take some extra time and effort.

The parts of your teeth that are covered by orthodontic bands and brackets are protected from decay (as long as they are not loose). The area that tends to cause the most problems is the "shelf" where brackets, tubes, and wires stick out away from the teeth. This shelf makes it more difficult to clean the spaces between your gums and the orthodontic appliances. If you don't get these areas clean, the gums swell, get puffy, and become even harder to maintain. Continued neglect of these areas may result in tooth decay, permanent staining /decalcification of your teeth, or gum disease, as well as a delay in your treatment.

Plaque is a sticky, white substance that collects on your teeth. It is made up of bacteria, food, and saliva. If plaque and trapped food are left on your teeth and around your braces, they can cause swollen gums, bad breath, marks on your teeth, and cavities. Plaque can also discolor your teeth and make them look yellow. Don't let any of these things happen to you...be your smile's best friend by brushing often and properly. Also, remember to visit your family dentist for regular check-ups.

## BRUSHING

- Brush after every meal, using a soft bristle toothbrush to prevent gum recession.
- Brush under, above, behind, and around all surfaces of every tooth and bracket, and stimulate your gums gently with the toothbrush.
- Use circular, vibrating motions around the gum lines, 10 seconds on each tooth, about 3 minutes or the length of a song on the radio.
- Be sure to check your teeth and brackets after brushing. If they are not clean and shining, **BRUSH AGAIN!**
- You can do a great job with either an electric OR manual toothbrush — it is all about technique and duration!

## FLOSSING

- Daily flossing is **very** important.
- Using a floss threader will make flossing much easier. The day you get your braces placed, we will give you a 'Survival Kit' with a sample of PLATYPUS ortho flossers included (more can be ordered at [platypusco.com](http://platypusco.com)). However, Oral B makes a great product called SuperFloss, which has the floss and threader combined into one.
- Gently thread the floss up under the wire, pull the floss through, and then floss like normal.

## EXTRA HELP

- Although not a necessity, a Waterpik is a good adjunctive tool — use it before you brush and floss to loosen plaque.
- For extra protection against cavities and white spots we recommend "MI Paste Plus" (at [Smilox.com](http://Smilox.com)) in addition to brushing/flossing.

## REGULAR DENTAL CHECK-UPS

It is very important to see your dentist before, during, and after orthodontic treatment. Even though we are seeing you every 4-6 weeks, your appointments with us do not take the place of your regular dental check-ups with your family dentist. Cleanings every 6 months there is good, but every 3-4 months during orthodontic treatment is even better. If you don't have a family dentist, we would be happy to give you the names of several in your area. Your dentist/hygienist can clean very effectively around all your braces.