

## **ABOUT YOUR REMOVABLE APPLIANCE**

### **In the beginning**

In the first few days you will feel your brace to be big, awkward and clumsy. It may make your mouth water so that you swallow a lot. It will make your voice sound different because it is not the same shape as the roof of your mouth and it will take your tongue several days to get used to the difference, your voice will return to normal, **but only if you wear the brace.** The teeth may ache a little during the first few days or after the appliance has been adjusted because they are not used to it. An aspirin or paracetamol (whatever you would take for a headache) will make you more comfortable. IT TAKES TIME TO GET USED TO THE BRACE.

The appliance works by applying a gentle steady pressure to the teeth, this is why the appliance should be worn ALL THE TIME (nearly 24 hours per day). Ideally it should be removed only for contact sports and cleaning. When the appliance is taken out the teeth will start to drift back to their original positions. If the brace is out for a day you can lose a week's progress.

You will be shown how to take the appliance in and out, after a few times it will become almost automatic. Please use your fingers to put the brace in, if you try to 'bite' it into position, you could distort it quite easily. It is usually best to put the appliance in at the front first, then one side, then the other. Push on the plastic rather than the wire clips and take care that the wires are in the correct place. If you are not careful you may break it.

Most braces have a plastic 'bite-platform' behind the top front teeth, this will stop your back teeth meeting as they normally do. THIS IS INTENDED AND IS NORMAL, it is part of the way the brace works. For this reason, it is best to wear the brace when you eat (but remember to rinse it under a tap or clean afterwards).

The brace is quite strong in your mouth but is quite fragile when it is out of your mouth. Unless otherwise instructed, the appliance should only be taken out for contact sports and cleaning. Any breakages or loss of appliance will slow the progress of your treatment.

### **Looking after the brace and your mouth**

When out of the mouth, the brace is best kept slightly damp, in a solid box (a soap box, a small Tupperware or 'brace-box'). These are available from reception or from most chemists.

The brace must be kept CLEAN. Food debris and germs will build up around the appliance. If this material is allowed to remain on the brace, it will damage the teeth and gums. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP YOUR TEETH AND BRACE CLEAN, nobody else can do it for you. If the brace and mouth are not kept clean, you will find that your breath will smell and your gums will become red, swollen and will bleed easily. If this occurs you MUST be extra thorough with your brushing even though it will make the gums bleed initially. Until the rubbish is removed from around the teeth and gums, the tissues cannot recover. **REMEMBER – clean and healthy gums do not bleed.**

To clean the brace, a good scrub with a toothbrush and toothpaste, twice a day (when you clean your teeth) is usually sufficient. After meals, rinse the brace under a tap to remove loose debris. There are proprietary cleaners for braces and dentures available (e.g Steradent, Retainer Brite) but while the brace is in the cleaning solution, the teeth are returning to their original positions (though slowly).

### **Beware**

You normally feel temperature mainly through the roof of your mouth. The brace, by covering the roof of your mouth, interferes with this. **BE CAREFUL – Do not burn your lips, tongue or cheeks by eating or drinking anything too hot – remember, it is probably hotter than you think!**

**IF IN ANY DOUBT, PLEASE ASK YOUR ORTHODONTIST OR DENTIST**