

Habit Appliance

The appliance that has been placed in your mouth is called a habit appliance. It is intended to help you stop a thumb or finger habit and/or to help re-train an improper tongue position or swallowing pattern. It is necessary to place an appliance due to the harm and distortion the habits or tongue posture can have on your teeth.

It is very important that you keep your appliance very clean. If you are not brushing thoroughly around the bands and wires, it is possible you can develop cavities or swollen gums. We have shown you how to properly clean your appliance. Please follow our instructions very closely.

While you have bands glued to your teeth, it is important you use a fluoride rinse. This is an aid in preventing cavities or decalcification (spots) on the enamel. We have recommended an over-the-counter rinse for you. Your parents will need to purchase this at the drug store. We need you to clean your teeth very thoroughly just before bed, then rinse vigorously with water to flush out loose debris. Then, rinse with the fluoride rinse for at least one minute and spit it out.

You have to be very careful what you eat or put in your mouth. Anything hard, tough, or real sticky can loosen the bands. Loose bands will require an extra visit to come in and re-glue the appliance. Loose bands allow food to pack in-between the tooth and band, and then can cause decay or spots.

For a short period of time it will feel awkward eating, swallowing, and speaking. All these will improve with time. Please be patient during this adjustment period. Your tongue will tend to play with the wire a lot at first. Your tongue may actually get a little sore. This will get better as you get use to the appliance. Eventually, you will see an impression on your tongue from the wire. Do not be alarmed. This is not permanent and it will go away once the appliance is removed.

It takes a very long time to break a habit such as you have. That is why the appliance needs to stay for many months. You may see the habit stop in just 2-6 weeks, but do not let that fool you. If the appliance came out then, the habit would quickly come back in most cases.

If we are also trying to re-train you tongue and swallowing pattern, please work on the exercises we have given you and your parents. It takes a very long time to change these patterns, if they can be changed. It takes a lot of time, repetition, and dedication to even have a chance at changing these patterns.

Please follow all our instructions closely. If you or your parents have a concern or question, please ask us. Good luck and do your best. We need your help to help you!