Congratulations! You have just taken the first step towards a beautiful, healthy smile! We work hard to provide you with the finest orthodontic care possible. In order to obtain the best results and finish treatment in a timely manner, your cooperation is essential!

1. The teeth MUST be kept clean! You should brush after meals and before bedtime, paying special attention to cleaning the gums and around the brackets. This is where food and bacteria will accumulate, possibly causing swollen gums and tooth decay. Please review the provided handouts about home care options and brushing instructions for more information on this very important topic.
2. Care must be taken during eating to avoid breaking brackets and wires. Excessive breakage results in LONGER treatment time!

**Please avoid:**

-Hard candy, suckers, Jolly Ranchers, mints, etc.

-Bubblegum (sugar-free gum is a safe alternative!)

-Ice (ok in drinks, but never ok to chew!)

-Nuts and nut brittles

-Chewy caramels, taffy, Starbursts, Skittles, etc.

-Crunchy croutons or bacon bits, hard pizza crusts, beef jerkey strips

-Pens, pencils, bottle caps or other objects

**Foods to be eaten with CAUTION:**

-Raw vegetables (cut up in small pieces, or even better to cook)

-Corn on the cob (best to cut off the cob)

-Popcorn is ok, just avoid the partially popped or unpopped kernals

-Tortilla chips, Doritos, Fritos, Cheetos (break large chips into small pieces)

-Soda pop, sports/energy drinks, juices, lemonade—while not entirely off limits, all contain high amounts of sugar and acid which is *very* damaging to the teeth. It’s best to eliminate these from your diet, but if you must drink them, please drink with a meal, and no more than one per day.

3. We recommend the use of a mouthguard for all contact sports or anytime you could experience a blow to the face either from a ball or a possible fall. The “lip bumpers” are good for playing instruments or covering the brackets when needed. Wax is your friend for pokey wires and brackets, and warm salt water rinses, as well as BraceAid (numbing gel), are helpful for cheek or gum soreness/irritation. Over the counter pain medication can be used as needed to help alleviate discomfort, please follow label instructions

Please visit our website (see below) for more information about your braces, or feel free to ask our staff or doctors about any questions that may arise. We’re excited to work with you on creating a healthy, beautiful smile that will last a lifetime!