



Food and Drinks to Avoid

A healthy diet means a healthy body, healthy teeth, and a better result from your or your child's orthodontic treatment. If braces or other orthodontic appliances are cemented or bonded onto the teeth, there are two main categories of food to avoid during orthodontic treatment: **1) hard, crunchy foods** and **2) sticky foods**. Hard, crunchy foods can distort, bend, or break orthodontic appliances. Sticky foods can pull and loosen orthodontic appliances. Sticky foods are also very difficult to remove and clean from orthodontic appliances. Also, avoid taking large bites of any type of food. Food should be cut, torn, or broken-up into smaller pieces. Excessive, repetitive chewing of large pieces of food, whether the food is hard or soft, can damage orthodontic appliances. In general, use common sense about the foods you or your child eats during orthodontic treatment. In addition, please avoid nail biting and pen/pencil chewing habits.

Below are lists (but not all-encompassing) of foods to avoid and food/drinks to have much less of during orthodontic treatment:

Foods to avoid:

- Chewing gum (all kinds, including sugar-free & non-stick)
- Ice cubes
- Hard bread/pizza crusts
- Pretzels
- Crunchy snack chips (e.g., Fritos, Doritos, Zapps, etc.)
- Nuts
- Apples or any fruit that requires a direct bite (unless cut into bite-sized pieces)
- Sticky candies (e.g., Tootsie Rolls, Now-N-Laters, Skittles, Laffy Taffy, caramel, Starbursts, AirHeads, etc.)
- Hard candies (unless just sucked on)
- Popcorn (large handfuls)
- Meat on a bone (e.g., chicken, ribs)
- Carrots (unless cut into bite-sized pieces)
- Corn-on-the-cob
- Hard candy, granola, or snack bars

Foods to eat much less of:

- Foods containing large amounts of sugar (e.g., candy, ice cream, cookies, cake, pie, etc.)

Drinks to have much less of:

- Soft drinks (e.g., colas, Mountain Dew, Sprite, etc.)
- Other sugary drinks (e.g., Kool-Aid)
- Coffee
- Tea (sweet or un-sweetened)