



Orthodontic “First Aid”

During routine orthodontic treatment, a certain amount of discomfort involving your teeth, gums, tongue, lips, and cheeks is normal and should be anticipated. Most times this discomfort will go away several days after your orthodontic appointment. Some irritations of your soft tissues (i.e., gums, tongue, lips, and cheeks) may persist for a week as they “toughen up” and get used to rubbing against your orthodontic appliances. Oftentimes relief can be obtained without an additional visit to our office. Here are some orthodontic “first aid” suggestions to use at home in order to help minimize the discomfort that you may encounter:

1. **GENERAL TOOTH SORENESS** — Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) can be used as needed by following the dosage instructions on the medication’s label. Continuous, long-term usage of these medications during orthodontic treatment is not necessary, nor is recommended.

2. **LOOSE APPLIANCES** — In general, orthodontic appliances should not become loose if patients follow our instructions for eating and appliance care, because the bonding materials we use are the best available and quite strong. However, accidents can happen! **Please contact our office as soon as possible if any broken appliances occur so we can make arrangements for their repair. We kindly request that you do not arrive at our office and then report broken appliances. We always appreciate you calling in advance.**

LOOSE BAND OR BRACKET — If the band or bracket is still attached to wire, leave in place. If uncomfortable, place orthodontic wax on it. If a band or bracket comes off or out completely, place it in a plastic baggie and bring to next appointment.

LOOSE/DISPLACED WIRE — Try to place wire back in place with fingers or tweezers. If that is not possible, contact our office for advice before clipping wire. If any discomfort, place orthodontic wax on it.

POKING WIRE — Try to push sticking wire down with spoon or eraser. If not possible, place orthodontic wax on it and contact our office for advice.

3. **ULCERS** — Three types of treatments/medications, one to relieve discomfort, one to protect, and one to heal, may be necessary to help get relief from these soft tissue irritations. Medications can be purchased over-the-counter at your local drugstore.

TOPICAL ANESTHETIC — Either a liquid or a gel that you apply to numb the ulcer until it can heal. These medications are commonly sold under the names Anbesol, Orajel, or Orabase. Any of these are fine, as long as their active ingredient is 20% Benzocaine.

TOPICAL BARRIER — This covers the ulcer with a protective coating that prevents further rubbing on the ulcer. This medication is sold under the name Orabase Soothe-N-Seal.

MOUTHRINSE — This promotes healing of the ulcer. Either of the following may be used:

SALT WATER — 1 small glass of warm water mixed with 1 teaspoon of salt; swish in mouth 3 times a day for 5 days.

PEROXYL (by Colgate) or RINCINOL (by Butler/GUM) — Follow dosage instructions on package after each meal for 3-4 days.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you feel unable to handle a problem on your own, have questions, or need advice regarding discomfort with your orthodontic appliances. For those times when you need our help outside of normal business hours, and it can’t wait until our next business day, you can get in touch with us by calling or texting our **Balhoff Ortho On-Call** number at **337-889-6019**. At this number you can directly reach one of our helpful team members. If absolutely necessary, they will even make arrangements to meet you at our office! As always, we’re here to help make your treatment with Balhoff Orthodontics as smooth as possible!

*** PLEASE NOTE:** Any tooth discomfort or soft tissue irritations that persist for **MORE THAN TWO (2) WEEKS** may indicate a more serious condition that warrants specific treatment by our office, your general dentist, and/or another dental specialist. Please notify our office and/or your general dentist immediately if any such condition should persist.