

How to Handle Orthodontic Emergencies

Fortunately, it is rare for an orthodontic emergency to occur, but on this page we have outlined the ways to treat the few emergency cases that sometimes do happen. Please use the information here to learn how to treat minor emergencies at home so you can eliminate extra trips to the office. It is important to remember that when a bracket is loose or a wire sticks out, you do not have to come to the office right away unless you are in pain or are experiencing severe discomfort.

Loose or Broken Bracket



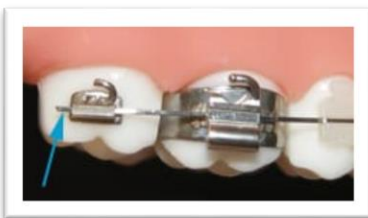
Eating hard foods is usually the cause of breakage. This isn't an emergency, and if you are not experiencing discomfort or pain, you don't need to come into the office outside of your scheduled appointment. Simply leave a loose or broken bracket in place and cover with wax for comfort if needed. If the bracket comes out completely, please bring it with you to your regular appointment and let one of our team members know about the issue.

Loose Band



Bands can come loose when chewing on or eating sticky foods. Fortunately, we rarely use bands unless we need them when using expanders or habit breakers. In those cases we do use bands, if the bands become loose, please keep your regular appointment and inform one of the doctors or staff members about the issue.

Wire End Poking



Occasionally, a wire can stick out and irritate cheeks. If the irritation starts after you leave the office, push the wire back inside of the molar tube by using a pencil eraser or a cotton swab. You can also use clean nail clippers cleaned with rubbing alcohol and cut the wire yourself. If you are unable to resolve the issue, and the wire keeps bothering you, please contact your doctor.

How to Handle Orthodontic Emergencies (cont.)

Ulcer Inside Mouth



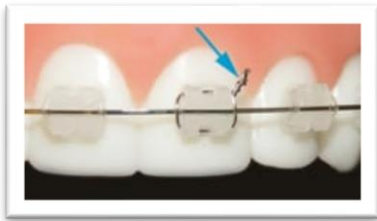
It is normal to experience some small sores or ulcerations on the inside of your lips or cheeks at the beginning of treatment. Your mouth needs to get used to the braces, and within a week, those ulcerations will begin to disappear on their own. If you find that they continue to be irritating, let your doctor know. You may use wax to cover the edges of the hooks on the brackets that may be causing those ulcers. Make sure that you keep the area clean and give yourself some time to adjust to your new braces.

Wire Completely Out



Occasionally during treatment, the wire could completely come out of the tube. If this happens, try to push it back into the tube with your hands or tweezers. If you are unable to, you may use clean nail clippers to cut the wire and remove any loose pieces. If you are unsuccessful, and the wire continues to bother you, contact your doctor.

Poking Steel Tie



We sometimes use steel ligatures to ligate the wire to the teeth. Occasionally, eating hard food may dislodge the ends of the steel ligature and irritate lips and cheeks. To fix this problem, you can use the end of a pencil eraser to push the end of the steel tie back into place. You may also use wax to cover the ends to keep the wire from irritating your cheeks.

Tooth Discomfort and Soreness

Your teeth may become sore after your braces are installed. The soreness usually lasts for about a week. If you experience discomfort, eat a diet of soft foods and take Tylenol or Advil to reduce any soreness. It can also be helpful to chew sugarless gum. Chewing may be uncomfortable, but it will increase the blood flow to the teeth to reduce discomfort. As time goes on, when the teeth start shifting into their new positions, they may become slightly loosened. Do not be alarmed by this, as it is perfectly normal. The looseness will correct itself when the braces are removed.