

# Functional Appliances

## What is a functional appliance?

A functional appliance is a removable brace that works on the upper and lower teeth at the same time.



## When are functional appliances used?

They are commonly used in growing patients when there is a discrepancy between the size of the upper and lower jaws. They help improve the position of the jaws and teeth.

## How much do I need to wear the brace?

The number of hours per day that you are expected to wear the brace will be explained. With the correct number of hours of wear you will find a great improvement in the position of your teeth and jaws and you will look better immediately. It commonly takes between 9-12 months for the functional appliance to work. This is usually followed up by fixed braces for another 12-18 months. However, this will be assessed by your treating orthodontist.

## Will it be painful?

For a few days when you are first fitted with the brace. You can take pain relief (such that you would take for a headache, following the recommended dosage) if necessary. If there is a sore area causing redness or ulceration you should attend the casualty service between MON-THURS 08.45am to 09.15 am.

## Will it affect me in any other way

Your speech will be different. Practice speaking with the brace in place for example you can read out loud at home on your own and within a couple of days your speech will return to normal. You may find that you produce an excessive amount of saliva and find yourself swallowing a lot to begin with. This is quite normal and will settle within a few days.

### **Does my brace need tightening?**

You will be seen regularly at the Dental Hospital to monitor how your treatment is progressing

Bring your functional appliance each visit. This allows us to check whether any adjustments are necessary.

### **Can I eat normally?**

You may not be able to eat with your functional appliance in place. You will be advised about this. If you have been advised to take it out for eating, make sure it is placed in its box and put back in immediately after eating. For your orthodontic treatment to work well and in the shortest possible time it is important you take good care of your teeth and appliance.

You must avoid:

- Eating toffees, sticky sweets, boiled sweets, chewing gum and keep sugary snacks to a minimum
- Drinking fizzy drinks including diet drinks & flavoured water and excessive amounts of fruit

### **Are there any risks of treatment?**

Please read the risks and benefits information sheet, risks include:

- Poor cleaning around braces and a high sugar diet during treatment can cause damage to the teeth in the form of white or brown marks.
- Gum disease including bleeding gums and recession.
- Teeth with big fillings in them or that have had trauma can die over a long period of time, with or without braces

### **What if I don't wear my braces?**

The success of your treatment is directly dependent on how well you wear your brace.

We may stop treatment before your bite has been corrected if we feel that you are not wearing the brace as instructed.

### **How do I look after my braces?**

It is important you brush well three times per day using a fluoride toothpaste. If possible carry a brush with you for use after lunch. Take the brace out to clean your teeth. You should also gently brush the brace daily, taking care not to damage the wires.

### **What if I lose or break my brace?**

If your brace breaks you should come to the departments Orthodontic Emergency Clinic:

**Please contact our team on  
020 7767 3200 to get an emergency appointment. The clinics run Monday-  
Thursday 0900-0930.**

**Do not wait for your next routine visit because the correction you have achieved may be undone without the appliance in place for a sufficient amount of time.**