

# **COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS**

## **Practice Arrangements**

At the time of writing, the public health guidance we have all been given is to keep children off school and self-isolate as much as possible.

The British Orthodontic Society is advising that **no orthodontic patient should attend any clinic at this time**. In an extreme emergency, the patient should contact the practice by phone and discuss ways of resolving their problem at home.

In line with this public guidance, we have taken the decision to **close the practice (except for emergency calls) until further notice**. We aim to open again as soon as possible based on the public health advice we receive. This will be reviewed on a daily basis.

We understand this can be a worrying time for us all. So, with this in mind, we have prepared this Q&A sheet to answer some common questions which may arise.

**The British Orthodontic Society Website will also feature videos of how to solve most issues at home.**

**Please do not contact the practice unless you have first read this advice sheet and attempted to solve the problem yourself.**

## **Common Questions:**

### **Why has the practice closed?**

The practice has closed as we feel this is how best we can protect the staff and public during this challenging time. Also, it is possible our clinicians may be redeployed to other areas of the NHS to assist the fight against the virus and we want to be available to help.

### **I have a brace/retainer problem. How can I solve this at home?**

Please be reassured that it is very rare to have a true emergency in orthodontics. If you have a bracket that has broken off or loose, we will fix it at your next appointment. If your brace is rubbing you can get either igloo or orthodontic wax from Amazon. The wax covering of a Baby-Bel or Edam cheese can make a good alternative to orthodontic wax if something feels scratchy. Just dry the area and press it over the site that is rubbing. If the wire is digging in, you can cut it with nail clippers. Cracked retainers should be worn until we can reopen. Please also refer to the **brace care page** of our website for demonstration videos. Common issues can be dealt with as follows:

#### **Wires digging in**

If a thin wire, it may be possible for the patient or family member to use tweezers to replace wire in the tube/band or tweezers and a nail clipper/scissors to shorten the long end.

It may be that a thin wire is the correct size but may have rotated round the teeth so that it is short on one side and long on the other. Using tweezers, a pencil with a rubber on the end or a teaspoon, it may be possible to push the wire back round to prevent the long end digging in.

If the wire is very thick and stiff it may not be possible to cut the wire with home instruments. If this is the case it may be necessary to cover the wire to prevent it being sharp. You can buy relief wax/silicone online (Orthodontic Wax). Failing that using a wax covering from hard cheese (baby-bell, cheddar), Blue tack or even chewing gum may help.

### **Broken bonded (glued on) retainers**

Push the wire back down towards the tooth as much as possible. (Fingers or tweezers).

Cover it with best medium available (Ortho wax, Cheese wax, Blu tack, chewing gum). Only if this does not work, cut the exposed unbonded wire using tweezers and nail clippers/scissors, gently pull the wire to remove the whole retainer and wear the removable retainers full time.

### **Cracked Retainers**

Wear these all day, unless there is a risk of swallowing or inhalation.

### **Lost Retainers**

Order online a 'boil in the bag' (heat mouldable) gumshield to use and wear at night to reduce the risk of relapse (unwanted tooth movement). It should be noted that these appliances aren't specifically designed to hold teeth in position so the manufacturer cannot be held responsible for any relapse.

### **Gold Chains**

If the gold chain was recently placed and is now dangling down, it may be possible to cut it short. Gold is quite a soft metal and it may be possible to cut the chain using some nail scissors or nail clippers. Always hold the loose end with tweezers or similar item. If possible, leave at least 5 links through the gum so it can be used later by your orthodontic team.

### **Aligner therapy (e.g. Invisalign)**

If your current aligner is in good order keep wearing it as much as possible. If your current aligner is broken or ill fitting, step back to your previous aligner.

### **Bracket off**

This is not urgent unless it is causing trauma to the soft tissues. If so, use Cover it with best medium available (Ortho wax, Cheese wax, Blu tack, chewing gum).

### **Elastic Bands**

You should continue wearing your elastics until the date of your original appointment. Then stop and keep safe any elastics you have left over. This puts the brace in "park mode". If you have been told by the clinician to monitor the front bite and you notice it getting worse, then contact the practice for advice. It would be helpful if you took a selfie of the bite and emailed it to us too.

### **Band off**

If the band is very loose and you are worried you may inhale or swallow it, then remove it and cut the wire. If the band is simply loose but mostly staying in place, push the band back on with your finger and it can then be left in place. If you are unsure, call and email us a selfie of it. Please ensure you adhere to good oral hygiene and a low sugar diet to prevent decay under the band and around your tooth.

### **Removable appliances/ Twin-blocks**

If fractured or ill-fitting do not wear the appliance.

### **Separators (blue elastics put between teeth)**

These should be removed. Attempt removal with end of safety pin, small paper clip or wooden tooth pick.

### **Lost module (coloured/grey elastics that fit on the bracket square)**

This is not a significant problem. You can try to make wire where the module has been lost secure with dental wax, cheese wax, Blu tack or chewing gum.

### **Lost spring**

No treatment is required.

### **Loose spring**

Cover it with best medium available (Ortho wax, Cheese wax, Blu tack, chewing gum).

### **Fractured/Frayed elastic power chain.**

No treatment is required. You can cut the frayed end as short as possible to improve comfort. Nail clippers or scissors can be used for this purpose.

### **Exposed end of wire tie – long ligature or short ligature.**

Re-tuck the sharp end under wire/bracket using tea spoon or tweezers or the rubber end of a pencil. Remove the wire if broken with tweezers if possible. Cut the frayed end as short as possible to improve comfort with nail cutters or scissors. Alternatively, cover for comfort using Ortho wax, Cheese wax, Blu tack or chewing gum.

## **Will you still be open for emergencies?**

**Yes, but only for telephone advice.** If you have a problem with your retainer or part of your brace is causing pain or an inhalation risk, **and you have tried the above measures**, then contact us in the usual way on **0151 707 2312**. We can be contacted by phone throughout our normal working hours. We will advise you how to solve your problem at home. A selfie sent to the practice e-mail may be helpful. Please note that a broken bracket is not an emergency and can wait until the practice re-opens. For severe dental emergencies outside normal hours, please contact NHS out of hours on **01614769651**. If you have had symptoms of the virus such as cough and/or fever and have a dental emergency, then please self-isolate and contact NHS 111 for advice.

## **What is a severe dental emergency?**

This includes severe dental pain not managed with over the counter medication, severe facial swelling affecting the throat and/or eye or uncontrollable bleeding following tooth removal. In these cases, contact NHS out of hours on 01614769651.

## **How do I contact you?**

If you have an emergency, and have tried to solve the problem yourself without success, you can contact us on our usual practice number **0151 707 2312**. We will be available by phone during our normal working hours. Please do not send emails to the practice as we may not be able to respond. For up to date information see our website [www.liverpoolbraceplace.co.uk](http://www.liverpoolbraceplace.co.uk) Our policy is checked daily based on the public health advice we receive.

## **What is a brace/retainer emergency?**

If part of the brace is causing pain, or you are worried you may swallow or breathe it in, then please contact us. Another example would be a lost or broken retainer which no longer fits. If you are not sure, you can call us for advice. A broken/loose bracket which is still attached to the wire is not an emergency and can wait.

### **I've got a loose bracket, should I call you?**

**No**, please see the previous answer.

### **When will you open again?**

We don't know. We are preparing for the closure to run to the end of June 2020, but this could be sooner or later depending on the public health advice we receive. We will contact you as soon as possible when we have this information available.

### **My appointment has been cancelled. When will I be seen?**

We will be contacting patients with existing appointments to inform them of the cancellation. Unfortunately, we cannot make another appointment at this stage. We will contact you as soon as we know the date we can re-open. Appointments will be sent out by post and prioritised according to clinical need. We thank you for your understanding in this matter.

### **The new appointment I've been sent isn't convenient, what should I do?**

When we re-open, you can contact us by telephone to rearrange it. Please be patient with us as our phone may be very busy during this time. We will be operating a skeleton staff and want to prioritise the phone for emergencies. We will get back to you as soon as we can.

### **Won't this affect my brace treatment?**

There will inevitably be a delay in the progress of your treatment. However, most appliances are safe and stable to leave for many months if a good standard of toothbrushing is well maintained. Our clinicians have checked the clinical notes progress of everyone affected to make sure.

### **What about the elastics I'm wearing?**

You should continue wearing your elastics until the date of your original appointment. Then stop and keep safe any elastics you have left over. This puts the brace in "park mode". If you have been told by the clinician to monitor the front bite and you notice it getting worse, then contact the practice for advice. It would be helpful if you took a selfie of the bite and emailed it to us too.

### **My brace is removable. Should I still wear it?**

**Yes**. You should continue wearing your removable brace as instructed.

### **I've been told to turn the key of my removable brace. Should I still do this?**

**Yes**. You should continue to do this, but stop the turns on the date of your original appointment.

### **What about my retainers?**

Keep wearing your retainers as you have been advised.

### **I've broken/lost my brace or retainer. What should I do?**

Order online a 'boil in the bag' (heat mouldable) gumshield to use and wear at night to reduce the risk of relapse (unwanted tooth movement). It should be noted that these appliances aren't specifically designed to hold teeth in position so the manufacturer cannot be held responsible for any relapse. If your retainer is cracked but not causing trauma or a risk of inhalation, then wear it all day except for eating and drinking.

### **I was due to be seen for a first appointment. Will I go back on the waiting list?**

**No.** Your appointment will simply be rearranged and prioritised accordingly.

### **I've had symptoms of the virus and am having brace/retainer problems. What should I do?**

**Do not** come to the practice. Self-isolate and call NHS 111

### **I've had teeth out but no brace fitted. What should I do?**

**Do not worry.** There is usually no problem with the delay. If you notice the spaces closing up a lot (e.g. half of the original space) then contact us for advice. Selfies of the teeth emailed to us would be helpful for this.

### **I'm due to have teeth out at my dentist, should I still go?**

You should take your dentist's advice. Please see the above answer. However, it is unlikely your dentist will still proceed with the procedure at this time. If in doubt, the best thing is to cancel the appointment.

### **My dentist won't take my teeth out like you asked. What should I do?**

You should take your dentist's advice. We can always rearrange appointments to fit around this.

### **I was due to have my brace off. Do I have to wait?**

**Yes.** We know this is very disappointing, but we feel this is in the best health interests of staff, patients and public alike. If you have special concerns, please e-mail the practice.

### **I've finished self-isolation. Can I come in?**

**No.** Until we have more advice, if you have an emergency please contact NHS 111.

### **I'm a private patient and have taken out finance. What now?**

You will still receive your treatment as promised. This delay is temporary and for public health reasons. If you wish to delay payments to the finance company, you should contact them directly. Unfortunately, we cannot give financial advice.

### **Is the practice dangerous?**

**No.** We have very high standards of cross infection control. The decision has been taken to conform with the social isolation advice given by the government and public health advisors.

## **When will this all end?**

We don't know. We have provisionally considered June 2020 as the time we may go "back to normal", but will be acting on expert advice as it comes available and will contact our patients accordingly.

**We appreciate that this is frustrating for everyone, but we are acting in good faith for the protection of us all. We are all in this together, so we ask that you continue to be patient, polite and respectful to us during this difficult time.**

Best wishes and stay safe,

**The Liverpool Brace Place**

March 2020