



## Our teeth are under attack!

**Let's face it:** we live in a world that makes it hard to take care of our teeth. We're tempted every day to eat and drink sugary snacks that can cause cavities, and maybe we're even tempted to skip out on brushing our teeth every once in a while. But doing these things can have bad consequences on the health of our teeth.



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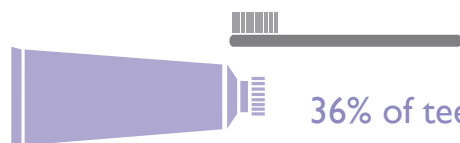
## Did you know...

- *The amount of sugar the average American consumes* per year is a whopping 71 pounds—that's 66 more pounds than the average American consumed in the 1800s!

### 71 pounds of sugar



- A startling **36% of teens** *don't brush* their teeth at least twice per day!



36% of teens

- Instead of brushing for two minutes, like dentists recommend, most **Americans brush for only 45 seconds!**

45 seconds



- Many candies, including Sour Skittles, SweeTARTS, and Laffy Taffy are actually **more acidic than battery acid**. Just imagine what that can do to your teeth!



All of these factors can contribute to an unhealthy smile. But don't get discouraged! There are many simple things you can do—and some things your orthodontist can do—to make sure your teeth are bright and healthy during orthodontic treatment.



## What you can do

Here are a few tips you can use to keep your teeth healthy and clean.



### Brush and floss regularly



Thoroughly brushing your teeth at least twice a day is the most important thing you can do to keep your teeth healthy during your orthodontic treatment. Braces make it easy for food to get stuck in and on your teeth. So it's even more important that you brush after every meal. You should also floss at least once per day. Using a floss threader can help you get the floss under the wires and in between your teeth. You can also carry toothpicks or an interdental brush to remove food particles that may be trapped in your braces.



### Avoid sugary foods

When you eat sugary foods, plaque-causing bacteria begin to form in your mouth. This plaque can not only have a negative effect on your smile while you have braces, but it can also permanently impact the way your teeth will look when you get your braces off. Limit sugary foods, and be sure to brush for at least two minutes after you do have a sugary snack.



### See your dentist regularly

Even with regular brushing, flossing, and a healthy diet, your mouth will still likely develop plaque. So regular visits to your dentist or hygienist are very important. Your dentist or hygienist will be able to thoroughly clean your teeth and check to be sure your gums are healthy. Just because you might think your braces will make it hard for your dentist to examine your teeth, that's no excuse to cancel your appointments—just the opposite, in fact!

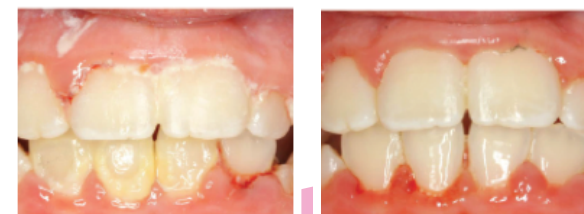


## What your orthodontist can do

*While maintaining a clean and healthy smile* is really up to you, there are some things your orthodontist can do to help keep your teeth and gums in great shape. One way your orthodontist can help is by using an orthodontic sealant.

Orthodontic sealants, like Opal Seal, prepare your teeth for orthodontic bonding and help keep your teeth healthy during treatment. Once applied, Opal Seal provides a physical barrier between plaque and your enamel, safeguarding your smile. It also delivers fluoride to the tooth surface, which helps preserve healthy enamel. As long as you practice good oral hygiene, Opal Seal will do its job safeguarding your enamel health.

Together, you and your orthodontist can keep your teeth healthy and clean, so when it's time for your braces to come off, you'll have a smile you can be proud of.



*This patient's oral hygiene habits were so poor, he had to have his braces removed before treatment was over. Luckily, his orthodontist used Opal Seal in his treatment. Even in cases of extremely poor oral hygiene, Opal Seal can help safeguard your teeth.*

### Sources

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