

ORTHODONTIC RECOMMENDATIONS

INTENDED FOR PATIENTS
UNDERGOING ORTHODONTIC
TREATMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

ADVICE FOR PATIENTS UNDERGOING ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

On March 16th 2020, orthodontists received strict orders from the Quebec Order of Dentists and the Public Health Authorities: to limit their treatments to only EMERGENCIES due to an **infection**, **severe pain** or **trauma** requiring immediate attention.

Only those patients presenting with the conditions listed above will be seen for an appointment. Under the specific context of orthodontic treatment, one must know that true emergencies are inexistent. Whereas, those clinical situations below may be encountered:

- **Injuries to the cheeks, lips or tongue** causing severe pain, swelling or bleeding.
- **Broken or unglued appliances** creating significant discomfort and inhibiting normal mastication and/or that you cannot remove yourself.

Please note that these conditions exclude any unglued or loose brace, including defective lingual wires or those unglued partially or completely.

If you present with one of the above conditions please contact your orthodontist immediately. After analyzing your condition, he will determine if an EMERGENCY appointment is necessary (exceptional measures). Otherwise, and for all other conditions, your appointment will be rescheduled after the pandemic.

If you suspect that you have contracted or have the COVID-19 virus and that your condition requires an emergency appointment, the Quebec Association of Orthodontists reminds you that you must communicate with 1 (877) 644-4545 (COVID-19 dedicated line) at Santé Québec. You will be informed about designated sites to receive your treatment in a secure fashion. To help you stabilize and relieve your present condition, the association has made available a guide describing the oral conditions that can present during orthodontic treatment and their associated solutions. We remind you that all orthodontic treatment is considered elective. Depending on the condition present in your mouth most cases can be stabilized yourself (or by a parent) and are not considered orthodontic emergencies.

ORAL CONDITIONS THAT MAY BE ENCOUNTERED DURING ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

What type of appliance are you wearing? Consult the appropriate section that describes your situation.

- 1.REMOVABLE APPLIANCES (NOT GLUED)**
- 2.FIXED APPLIANCES (GLUED)**
- 3.ORTHODONTIC BRACES AND ITS RELATED ACCESSORIES**
- 4.PROGRESSIVE CLEAR TRAYS (INVISALIGN OR OTHER)**
- 5.RETENTION APPLIANCES**

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1. REMOVABLE APPLIANCES (NOT GLUED)

Removable appliances are appliances that are not glued in place, we can insert them or remove them from the mouth.

Course of action for the best possible progression of your treatment during the temporary closure of your orthodontic clinic:

Continue to wear your removable appliance and respect the frequency recommended by your orthodontist.

SITUATIONS:

1.1. Broken, deformed appliance causing injury (appliance no longer fits properly in your mouth)

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Contact your orthodontist to obtain an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Contact your orthodontist to inform them of your situation and wait for your next appointment after the pandemic.

1.2. Lost Appliances

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Contact your orthodontist to obtain an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Stop wearing the appliance until your next appointment after the pandemic

2. FIXED APPLIANCES (GLUED)

Course of action for the best possible progression of your treatment during the temporary closure of your orthodontic clinic:

-Continue to follow the usual recommendations (recommended foods and dental hygiene).

-If you are in the midst of wearing an active appliance (turning with key), please stop the activations as prescribed by your orthodontist.

SITUATIONS:

2.1 Separators between the teeth

Small elastics (colored blue, purple, or white) inserted temporarily between the teeth. These separators create the required space between the teeth to allow for the comfortable delivery of a newly cemented appliance.

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Keep the separators in place till your appointment for the insertion of the appliance.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Using a pair of tweezers that has been disinfected, remove the separators by grabbing it from the portion above the tooth. If not possible, contact your orthodontist for an appointment as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT: if a separator is missing (you can no longer see it), it has either been swallowed or has made its way below the gums. If your child does not remember losing it or swallowing it, it is important to contact your orthodontist to obtain an appointment to check the gums. In the instance that it has travelled below the gum, the separator(s) must be removed.

2.2 Broken or partially uncemented appliances:

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Contact your orthodontist to obtain an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

If the appliance does not inhibit mastication, keep it as is and wait for your next appointment. If the appliance causes an injury or does not allow you to masticate properly please contact your orthodontist. He will evaluate the situation and will determine the necessity to plan an emergency appointment (exceptional measures)

IMPORTANT: if the appliance is partially glued and still present in the mouth, one must stop the activations if they have not yet been finished.

2.3 Appliance completely unglued

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

-Contact your orthodontist to obtain an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

-Keep the appliance in a safe place and wait for your next appointment after the pandemic. Do not forget to bring your appliance at that appointment.

IMPORTANT: do not attempt to put your appliance back into your mouth.

3. ORTHODONTIC BRACES AND ACCESSORIES

Course of action for the best possible progression of your treatment during the temporary closure of your orthodontic clinic:

Follow the most recent recommendations:

-If you wear elastics going from the top to the bottom teeth, continue to wear them as prescribed (same type of elastic and same position), but reduce the frequency to 8 hours per day (time recommended to stabilize your correction).

-Continue to wear your appliances or related accessories as recommended during your most recent visit.

IMPORTANT: Since the duration of the pandemic is unknown, it is important to respect the recommended elastic wear of 8 hrs per day to avoid running out.

SITUATIONS:

3.1 Long poking wire

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

- Cover the wire with orthodontic wax
- Attempt to bend the wire toward the tooth so that it is no longer facing the injured site.
- Attempt to cut the wire (the portion that is sticking out) with a nail cutter or a small plier (cuticle/nail cutter available in pharmacy)
- Contact your orthodontist to obtain an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Attempt to stabilize the situation to be comfortable and wait for your next appointment after the pandemic. In case of injury, swelling or bleeding please contact your orthodontist. He will evaluate the situation and will determine the necessity to plan an emergency appointment (exceptional measures).

3.2 Wire out of the bracket

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

- Call your orthodontist
- Cover the wire with orthodontic wax
- Attempt to push the wire back in with your fingers or even with the eraser at the end of a led pencil. Cut the long wire segment as close as possible to the next brace.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Attempt to stabilize the situation to be comfortable and wait for your next appointment after the pandemic. In case of injury, swelling or bleeding please contact your orthodontist. He will evaluate the situation and will determine the necessity to plan an emergency appointment (exceptional measures).

Note: orthodontic wax is sold in the pharmacy

3.3 An unglued or lost brace

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Keep your brace if possible and contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Keep your brace if possible and wait for your next appointment after the pandemic. In case of injury, swelling or bleeding please contact your orthodontist. He will evaluate the situation and will determine the necessity to plan an emergency appointment (exceptional measures).

3.4 Unglued bracket that stays attached to the wire

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Reposition the brace on the tooth and immobilize it by covering it with wax.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Attempt to stabilize the situation to be comfortable and wait for your next appointment after the pandemic. In case of injury, swelling or bleeding please contact your orthodontist. He will evaluate the situation and will determine the necessity to plan an emergency appointment (exceptional measures).

3.5 Unglued brace used for elastic wear

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Stop wearing that elastic as well as any others. Contact your orthodontist to obtain an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Stop wearing all elastics until next appointment after the pandemic

3.6 Lost or broken ligatures

Ligatures (metal or elastic) are fixed and serve to engage and stabilize the wires in the braces. They can sometimes detach or undo.

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Elastic ligature: if you have saved it, put it back using tweezers that have been disinfected.

Metallic ligature: cut the portion that is sticking out with a small plier. In case it is scraping, that portion can be bent on itself (towards the tooth) using the back of the eraser of a led pencil.

Contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Stabilize the situation utilizing the above methods. Wait for your next scheduled appointment with your orthodontist after the pandemic.

3.7 Broken or undone elastic chains

(They consist of links and cover each brace and are placed by your orthodontist to keep your teeth together.)

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Cut or remove the extra segment that is in the way.

Contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Cut or remove the extra segment that is in the way. Wait for your next scheduled appointment with your orthodontist after the pandemic.

3.8 Springs fixed in place on the side of the teeth (example: Forsus)

These metallic springs act to correct a discrepancy between the top and bottom teeth.

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

If the 2 parts are detached one from the other, it is possible to reinsert the rod (thinner portion) into the spring (thicker portion) by opening the mouth to a maximum and compress the spring for it to be shortened.

If this procedure is too difficult, stabilize each part. Attach the upper part (spring) along the teeth and orthodontic wire using dental floss around the wire. Do the same for the lower portion (rod). This procedure applies as well for springs that are only one piece.

Contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Stabilize the situation using the methods mentioned above. Wait for your next scheduled appointment with your orthodontist after the pandemic.

3.9 Lateral anchorage arms (Carriere appliance)

These arms are connected to high intensity elastics to correct the discrepancy between the upper and lower teeth.

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

If one of the arms or both arms are unglued, stop wearing both elastics.

Contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

If one of the arms or both arms are unglued, stop wearing both elastics. Wait for your next scheduled appointment with your orthodontist after the pandemic.

4. PROGRESSIVE CLEAR TRAYS (INVISALIGN OR OTHER)

Course of action for the best possible progression of your treatment during the temporary closure of your orthodontic clinic:

Follow your orthodontist's most recent recommendations:

- Continue to wear the trays and change them as frequently as prescribed.
- Once you have reached your last prescribed or available tray, complete the wear of that tray, then reduce the wear to 8 hours per day.
- Continue to wear your elastics as prescribed (same type of elastic, same position, but reduce the frequency to 8 hours per day).
- Continue to wear your appliances or related accessories as recommended during your last appointment.

Attention: certain trays cannot be worn without the orthodontist's intervention (example: reduction of enamel between the teeth). Be attentive to the recommendations added on the envelopes and contact your orthodontist as needed.

SITUATIONS:

4.1 I no longer have any new trays

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Continue to wear your last active tray until your next appointment and reduce the time to 8 hours a day. It is very important, actually, essential to not stop wearing your trays. Your last tray acts as a maintenance appliance for the actual position of your teeth. Please make sure to keep your previous trays in case of breakage or loss of your present trays.

Wait for your next scheduled appointment with your orthodontist after the pandemic.

4.2 My orthodontist was supposed to give me a new series of trays at my next appointment

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Your new series of trays, as well as the indicated clinical procedures related to the delivery of your trays, will be given to you at your regular appointment.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Since your next appointment is cancelled due to the pandemic, it will be impossible to give you your next series of trays. Note that it is forbidden according to our Code of Ethics to give you your new trays or to get them to you since this act is inherently part of a regular appointment with your orthodontist. The Quebec Order of Dentists was clear that there would be no exceptions during this pandemic period.

4.3 I lost or broke my present tray

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Contact your orthodontist to inform you of the next step.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Continue your treatment with your next tray but double the time prescribed by your orthodontist. If you do not have the next tray, go to the previous one.

4.4 I have lost an attachment

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Contact your orthodontist to inform you of the next step.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Continue to wear your trays till your next appointment after the pandemic.

4.5 I have lost a button that is used to attach an elastic

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

Stop wearing the elastic as well as any others.

Contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Stop wearing all elastics until your next appointment after the pandemic.

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5. RETENTION APPLIANCES

Appliances placed by your orthodontist at the end of your treatment. These appliances assure the stability of your results, which means that your teeth should not move after treatment.

There exists many types of retention appliances and they are often used in combination. These are the most commonly used: wires glued behind the teeth, removable palatal acrylic coverage combined with a metal arch surrounding the front teeth, as well as clear removable trays worn at night.

5.1. Unglued lingual wire (partially or completely)

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

If the wire bothers you, contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible. In the meantime, apply orthodontic wax on the portion of the wire that is irritating you.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

Apply orthodontic wax to the area of the wire that is bothering you and attempt to stabilize your situation.

In case of major injuries or severe irritation to the gums or tongue, contact your orthodontist. Your condition will be evaluated and a decision regarding the need for an emergency appointment will be evaluated (exceptional measures).

5.2. Broken or lost removable retainer

WHAT TO DO?

Normal conditions:

When you have lost or broken your removable retainer (palatal acrylic coverage, clear tray), contact your orthodontist as soon as possible.

Pandemic COVID-19 conditions:

When you have lost or broken your removable retainers (palatal acrylic coverage, clear tray), contact your orthodontist to schedule an appointment after the pandemic.