

## How to reduce your time in braces and favorite foods to avoid

Everyone wants to know how to achieve the perfect smile faster. Dr. Erdell has estimated how long your treatment will take, based on how teeth move, how difficult your case is, and the amount of cooperation a patient usually gives during treatment. But you can actually help speed up the process. Patient cooperation is very important and by increasing your cooperation, your case will move faster, and you will be one step close to that fantastic smile.

The following are some tips:

1. **Be nice to your braces!** If braces are broken or wires bent, they cannot do their job. Avoid hard, sticky foods that will break or bend your braces. These foods include the following:
  - a. **Ice** - damages braces and teeth. This is a **never!**
  - b. **Popcorn and nuts** - breaks off braces and causes gum infection. Try **"Pirate's Booty"**.
  - c. **Hard or sticky candy** – breaks braces and causes cavities. Try **soft candy** or chocolate and make sure to brush after.
  - d. Chips – avoid **hard corn chips**. Try **light potato chips** instead.
  - e. Meat - Cut meat off the bone.
  - f. Raw fruits and vegetables – Cut in small bits.
  - g. **Pencils, pens, fingernails**, etc. – these do not taste good and break braces so keep them out of your mouth.
  - h. **Bubble gum** – is very sticky and the sugar in it can cause cavities. Chew **sugarless gum instead** but only if you can make sure to not get it tangled in the braces.
2. **Clean your braces!** Keeping your braces plaque free is essential to speeding up your case. Plaque on your teeth will cause your case to slow down in two ways:
  - a. Plaque weakens the glue and can cause braces to come loose
  - b. Swollen gums caused by gingivitis do not allow rapid tooth movement along the wire.
3. **Follow instructions!** At times Dr. Erdell will ask you to wear elastic rubber bands or other appliances to give you that fantastic smile. Elastics and appliances only work when they are in your mouth! By following the instructions, you can be assured that your bite will correct in the shortest amount of time possible.
4. **Come to your appointments!** Dr. Erdell will put you on a specific schedule to complete your case on time. Make every attempt to be at each appointment at the scheduled time. If you miss your appointment, please call us as soon as possible so we can schedule a new appointment.

Please call us with any questions or talk to us during your appointments, we are happy to provide additional tips and advice!