



Getting into Gear

Now that your orthodontist has recommended a headgear as an important part of your treatment, it will help you to learn a little about it.

Headgear is a general name for a type of appliance that creates special forces for guiding the growth of your face and jaws. Orthodontists also use headgear to move your teeth into better position or to prevent them from moving when they're not supposed to. Because each case is different, the amount of time you'll need to wear your headgear will be determined by your orthodontist.

It's Important To Choose An Orthodontist.

An orthodontist is a specialist in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of dental and facial irregularities. All orthodontists are dentists, but only about six percent of dentists are orthodontists. Admission to orthodontic programs is extremely competitive and selective.

It takes many years to become an orthodontist and the educational requirements are demanding. An orthodontist must complete college requirements before starting a three- to five-year graduate program at a dental school accredited by the American Dental Association (ADA). After dental school, at least two or three academic years of advanced specialty education in an ADA-accredited orthodontic program are required to be an orthodontist. The program includes advanced education in biomedical, behavioral and basic sciences. The orthodontic student learns the complex skills required to manage tooth movement (orthodontics) and guide facial development (dentofacial orthopedics).

Only dentists who have successfully completed these advanced specialty education programs may call themselves orthodontists.

Orthodontists receive an additional two to three years of specialized education beyond dental school to learn the proper way to align and straighten teeth. Only those who successfully complete this formal education may call themselves "orthodontists," and only orthodontists can be members of the American Association of Orthodontists.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout your treatment or in the future, please consult your orthodontist or visit mylifemysmile.org.



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Orthodontic Headgear



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Types of Headgear

Here are two common types of headgear

The “Facebow” type consists of a bow that fits into braces on your back teeth and a strap that fits behind your neck or over your head to provide the desired amount and direction of pressure.



The “J Hook” type uses two individual wires with loops on their ends that attach to your braces. The wires are attached to a strap that fits over your head or behind your neck to supply the desired corrective pressure.

The type of headgear used in your treatment is what your orthodontist believes is best to guide your teeth and jaws into their new positions.

At first, your headgear may look a little strange to you, and it will seem a little awkward. But it’s a necessary part of your orthodontic treatment. Rest assured the healthy, beautiful smile that will be yours for a lifetime will be well worth the effort you make now.

To get the best results, wear your headgear as instructed.



Stay on Track

To get the best results from your headgear, follow these simple guidelines

Make sure to wear your headgear as directed by your orthodontist. It only works when you wear it!

- Always closely follow your orthodontist’s instructions for wearing your headgear. If you do, you’ll finish this part of your treatment as quickly as possible and with the best results.
- Always be careful and remove your headgear as you were taught. The headgear could injure your eyes, cheeks, lips, or your face.

(NOTE: In the event of even the most minor eye injury, please seek immediate medical help.)

- Be sure to remove your headgear before you begin running or playing sports, including rough-and-tumble games. Accidents can happen even when you’re just having fun.

- Be careful to prevent anyone from grabbing or pulling on your headgear. Do not wear headgear in situations where there is a chance that it could be pulled off or pulled out of place.
- Take your headgear with you to every appointment.
- Your orthodontist will give you instructions on the care and cleaning of your headgear. To keep the appliance working as it should, be sure to follow those instructions carefully.

Your teeth may be tender or even slightly loose the first few days you wear your headgear. This tenderness is normal and will disappear as you adjust to this new part of your treatment. If you continue to be uncomfortable for more than a few days, be sure to let your orthodontist know.