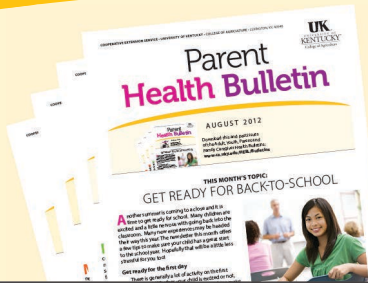


# Parent Health Bulletin



FEBRUARY 2014

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT BRACES

**B**races can be an important part of your child's oral health. If your child needs braces, it may be hard to decide on the best choice. Here is some basic information about braces.

### Deciding if braces are needed

Many people do not have teeth perfectly in line with one another. Teeth do not always grow in straight. For others, the top part of the mouth, or the upper jaw, may be a different size than the bottom part of the mouth, or lower jaw. For children, a dentist will usually be able to determine if braces are needed now or in the future. If your dentist tells you that your child needs braces, he or she may suggest that you meet



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# ***Wearing braces may mean your child will have to avoid eating some foods like sticky candies and gum.***

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with an orthodontist. An orthodontist is a dentist who specializes in braces.

There are different types of braces. Braces have changed since you were a child. Although they still have wires and rubber bands, braces used today are less noticeable. In fact, some braces are the color of your teeth. Even the metal wires are smaller than they used to be. There are often different color rubber bands used with braces. If your child is getting braces, you may want to suggest that they pick their favorite color for the rubber bands.

## **How do braces work?**

Braces are put on to help straighten the teeth. This happens because braces put a slight, but steady pressure on the teeth. The wires help move the teeth. A person may need rubber bands to help the upper and lower jaw line up with each other correctly.

People wear braces for different lengths of time. It is common for kids to wear braces for about two years. Some children will need braces for less time and some will need them for a longer time.

Wearing braces may mean your child will have to avoid eating some foods like sticky candies and gum. Soda may also be a problem because the sugar may get stuck around the braces and stay on your child's teeth. That may cause cavities. You may also need to cut up some foods for your child. Eating an apple off the core or eating corn on the cob may damage the braces. You may need to cut some foods into slices or take the corn kernels off of the cob. Talking to the orthodontist will be important. You and your child both need to know foods that may damage the braces.

*Braces today are less noticeable. Some braces are the color of your teeth. Even the metal wires are smaller than they used to be.*

## **Life after braces**

Once the braces are removed, taking care of the newly straightened teeth is important. Your child will need to wear a retainer to keep that smile in shape. A retainer will be made specifically for your child. It will be important to wear a retainer as instructed by the orthodontist.

Braces may not always be fun to deal with, but they are important to help your child have the best smile possible!

### **SOURCE:**

Nemours KidsHealth. Braces. Accessed on Dec 30, 2013 from: [http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/body\\_stuff/braces.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/body_stuff/braces.html)



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**Health Bulletin**

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