
Lower Holding Arch



What is a Lower Holding Arch?

The Lower Holding Arch is a simple appliance that keeps your back teeth in place and prevents them from shifting forward. We use it when someone has a space that needs to be maintained, or to help improve the bite.

Will it hurt?

Holding arches do not typically cause much discomfort. You may experience a little discomfort the first few days as you get used to the braces on the back molar teeth and the small wire behind your front teeth. If the braces on the sides of the bands irritate your cheeks, place a small ball of wax over them. Your cheeks will “toughen up” after a week or so and it will no longer be a problem.

What else will I experience?

Holding arches do not typically cause much discomfort, but they do require some getting used to, usually about 2-3 days. At first you may have excess saliva. When you leave our office after getting your holding arch, make sure the first thing you eat is something simple, so that you can get used to chewing and swallowing with it.

What should I avoid eating so that the holding arch stays in place?

- Avoid sticky foods because they could loosen the bands (rings) that keep the holding arch on your teeth. This will cause the holding arch to become loose, and may lead to cavities.
- Examples of sticky foods to avoid: Gum, Laffy Taffies, Airheads, jelly beans, caramel, Tootsie Rolls, gummie bears, Starbursts, and any similar type of food.
- Also avoid extremely crunchy foods as they can bend the bands, such as hard granola bars.

How do I keep it clean?

Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush, whether mechanical or manual. Make sure to brush all around the bands (rings) that are on your back teeth. Food tends to build up around the bands, especially under the small hooks on the braces. Make sure to angle your toothbrush to clean under the hooks where your gums end and your tooth begins. Brush well around and under the wire running behind your teeth.

Not brushing well can leave lots of food stuck around the bands. This can cause your gums to become swollen and red (gingivitis). It can also cause permanent white spots on your teeth, and these white spot can turn into cavities. Proper brushing will prevent this.

“It’s fun to flick with my tongue.”

While it may be convenient to play with by flicking the wire with your tongue, it is not a good idea as it will cause the metal to flex and eventually the wire will snap. The appliance will then need to be remade and a replacement fee will be assessed. It should not break if you don’t play with it.

Problem Solving - What to do if the holding arch becomes loose:

If you think the holding arch feels loose from your teeth (even though not visibly), or you are sure it is loose, please call us to schedule to have it rebonded. If you leave it loose for a long time the wire may snap. **Even if your appointment is coming up soon, please make sure to call in advance to inform us it is loose so that we can be ready at your appointment to rebond it.** If we aren’t informed in advance and you are scheduled for a very short appointment, we may not have time that day to rebond it. If it completely comes out of your mouth make sure to bring it to your visit.

If you have any questions regarding the management of this appliance, or any other aspect of treatment, please call our office.