

Orthodontic Department

Functional Brace

This leaflet has been written for patients who may need a functional brace.

Why do I need a functional brace?

- Your orthodontist has noticed that your **bottom jaw** is slightly **smaller** than your **top jaw**
- This causes a **gap** between your **top and bottom teeth (an increased overjet)**
- The aim of treatment is to **improve your bite**
- Once your bite is in a better position, it will be easier to fully correct your teeth with fixed braces.

What does a functional brace look like?

- A functional brace is a **removable brace that clips in and out**
- Usually, there will be **two separate braces**, one that fits on the **top teeth** and one that fits on the **bottom teeth** (very occasionally these two parts are joined together)
- The **plastic blocks** between the top and bottom braces make you **bite in a forward** position.



How will it feel when I am wearing them?



- To get an idea of how they will feel, bite the tips of your front teeth together
- You will feel a **stretch of the muscles** of your lower jaw
- Your functional brace will feel strange to begin with
- There is a lot of **plastic in your mouth** which takes a bit of getting used to
- You may feel like you have lots of **saliva** in your mouth.

Will the functional brace affect my speech?

- Your **speech will be affected**, but usually it gets better within the **first two days**
- To speed up the process, we advise you to **practice talking** with the braces in by reading out loud to yourself from a book or magazine.

When do I have to wear them?

- You need to wear your functional brace both during the **day and overnight**
- You should take them out to:
 - **Eat**
 - **Clean** your teeth
 - **Play sports** eg rugby or hockey (it is important you put a gum shield in instead)
- When you are **not wearing** your **functional brace**, **store** it in the **box** provided
- If you do not wear it for enough hours per day, your bite may not be fully corrected.

How will I clean them?

- Your functional brace should be cleaned with a **toothbrush and liquid soap**
- **Soak your brace** in 'Retainer Brite®' once or twice a week. This is available to purchase at our reception desk.

How will I know if the brace is working?

- Your **orthodontist** will **measure the gap** between your **top** and **bottom teeth** each time you come in
- This will give us a **measurement of your progress** with the brace
- Many people find that their back teeth do not fit together very well after a while; this is perfectly normal and will be corrected later in treatment.

How long will I wear them for?

- You will wear your functional brace for approximately **9 to 12 months**.

What if I do not think I could wear one?

- It is best to **be honest** if you feel you will not be able to wear a functional brace
- It is **custom made** to your mouth, and therefore a lot of effort and money is invested in making one for you
- Your orthodontist will let you know if there are any other options - for example taking out teeth and using fixed braces. Other options are unlikely to give as good a result.

Do they always work?

- If you wear your functional brace well they are **usually very effective**
- If you have **stopped growing they may not work**, therefore your orthodontist will measure if you are still growing
- For patients who are no longer growing, their jaw position can be corrected with **jaw surgery** when they are older.

More Information



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Contact Numbers:

We hope you have found this information useful, but if you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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