

WHAT CAN I EAT WITH BRACES?

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE



WILL GETTING BRACES CHANGE WHAT I EAT?

Braces, for many, symbolize a transformative journey toward a perfect smile. Yet, alongside the excitement of this new path, it is normal to wonder how it will affect your ability to eat the foods you like. “Will I have to bid farewell to my favorite candy bar? Will popcorn at the movies now be a distant memory?”

The truth is that you will need to make some adjustments to your diet to ensure your orthodontic treatment is successful. However, you might be surprised to learn that you can still enjoy many of your favorite foods. You might even discover new foods you like and healthier eating habits along the way!

Ask anyone who’s been through the braces journey, and they’ll likely tell you that every bite adjusted, every treat postponed, is all worth it for that final reveal. So to help keep you on track, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) has created this helpful guide for what you can, can’t, and shouldn’t eat with braces.

WHY DOES IT MATTER WHAT I EAT WITH BRACES?

Braces consist of delicate components. While designed to withstand typical wear, some foods can compromise or damage them. Each time a bracket breaks or a wire comes loose, it can set your treatment back.

Aside from protecting orthodontic appliances, certain foods increase the risk of oral health issues when particles become trapped. This is because braces add all kinds of nooks and crannies to your mouth that aren’t there naturally, and can be a little more difficult to clean.



WHAT YOU CAN'T EAT WITH BRACES

While embracing your journey to a healthier smile, there are certain foods you'll want to avoid completely. Anything hard, sticky, or difficult to bite into can pose a risk of broken appliances and prolonged treatment. These foods can damage brackets, dislodge wires, or lead to other complications:

- **HARD CANDY:** A risk to both braces and teeth.
- **STICKY CANDY:** Taffy, caramel, and the like can adhere stubbornly to braces and may cause brackets to loosen.
- **POPCORN:** Those kernels are braces' worst enemy and easily get caught in brackets and wires.
- **NUTS:** Their hard nature poses a direct risk.
- **CRUNCHY VEGGIES/FRUITS:** When uncooked, there's a risk they can break brackets when you bite into them.
- **PIZZA CRUST:** Especially when it's crispy and hard.
- **BAGELS OR HARD ROLLS:** Their density can be a challenge.
- **CHEWY CUTS OF MEAT:** Make sure to cut meat into bite-sized pieces before eating it to avoid stressing brackets and wires
- **ICE:** Crunching is a definite no-go with braces.
- **SNACK CHIPS & PRETZELS:** Any kind of hard or crunchy food may cause your bracket to break or cause damage to your wires.



FOODS THAT ARE ALWAYS SAFE FOR BRACES

New braces often equate to a sensitive mouth. If you can eat normally, that's great; it can help your sore teeth feel better faster. If not, you may want to try eating soft, gentle foods that help minimize discomfort as your teeth adjust:

- **OATMEAL:** This comforting choice isn't just soothing; it's a nutritional powerhouse.
- **SCRAMBLED EGGS:** Easy to chew, they offer the protein your body craves.
- **SOUPS:** Warm, comforting, and varied.
- **PASTA:** Opt for softer-cooked shapes.
- **SEAFOOD:** Particularly fish varieties that flake easily.
- **SOFT VEGETABLES:** Steamed or boiled, they're packed with vital nutrients.
- **MASHED POTATOES:** Creamy, filling, and utterly comforting.
- **PIZZA:** In general, this is soft enough to eat with braces. Just make sure to get pizzas with softer crusts.
- **SOFT CHEESES:** Delicious, calcium-rich, and perfect for those with braces.
- **BANANAS:** A great option for those undergoing treatment with braces.
- **BERRIES:** Packed with nutrients, many berries make a great snack choice that's both sweet and easy on brackets and wires.
- **YOGURT:** Creamy and versatile, perfect for any time of the day.
- **CHOCOLATE:** You don't need to give up this sweet treat with braces. Most chocolates are soft enough to be eaten without issue.
- **ICE CREAM:** Cold treats are not only comforting, but the cold also helps relieve some of the pressure caused by the wires.



10 ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR EATING WITH BRACES

Embarking on your orthodontic journey can be an exciting experience. Yet, it brings along a set of nuances, especially regarding your diet. Adjusting to eating with braces doesn't have to be daunting. Here are some expert-approved tips to make the process smoother and more comfortable:

- 1. START SMALL:** Initially, cut your food into small pieces. This minimizes the need to bite directly with your front teeth, which can be sensitive or risky with new braces.
- 2. GO SOFT:** Opt for softer foods right after tightening your braces. Think mashed potatoes, yogurts, and smoothies. These foods require less chewing and put minimal pressure on your braces.
- 3. SIDESTEP STICKINESS:** Sticky foods can adhere to your braces, making it challenging to clean them.
- 4. CHEW WITH CARE:** Slow down and chew your food gently. Braces can be delicate, and aggressive chewing might dislodge a bracket or distort a wire.
- 5. BEWARE OF CRUNCH AND CRISP:** Hard foods might damage the brackets or wires. It's best to cook, steam, or bake these to a softer consistency or cut them into manageable slices.
- 6. SWISH AND RINSE:** After eating, swishing water around your mouth is beneficial to dislodge any food particles stuck in or around your braces. This prevents plaque build-up and staining.
- 7. INVEST IN THE RIGHT TOOLS:** Carry a travel toothbrush or invest in a water flosser. Brushing and flossing can be a lifesaver, ensuring your braces remain clean, especially after meals.
- 8. STAY HYDRATED:** Drinking water throughout the day helps keep you hydrated and keeps your mouth clean. It helps rinse away food debris and acidic residues.
- 9. LISTEN TO YOUR ORTHODONTIST:** Your orthodontist will provide specific guidelines about avoiding foods and ways to take care of your braces. Their advice is based on years of experience and knowledge, so it's essential to follow their recommendations.

READY FOR BRACES?

Getting braces requires a few lifestyle changes to get the most out of your treatment. But hopefully, this guide has reassured you that your diet won't change too much. You can still enjoy many of the foods you normally eat, just with a little extra preparation. Yes, some snack foods may be off-limits while you have braces, but many alternatives are just as satisfying. You may even embrace healthier eating habits as a result!

**READY TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN THAT PERFECT SMILE?
CALL OUR OFFICE TODAY!**