

Orthodontic Elastic Wear Fact Sheet

What do orthodontic elastics do?

Orthodontic elastics are mostly used with fixed braces, and are placed between the upper and lower teeth to provide a specific direction of force. This helps the teeth to be guided into the ideal position for optimal aesthetics and function.

Who is likely to need to wear elastics?

There are several patients that may benefit from the use of orthodontic elastics during their treatment. This includes:

1. Patients with top teeth sticking out are likely to wear elastics as shown in these photographs:



2. Patients with a reverse bite who are likely to wear elastics as shown in these photographs:



3. Patients with a vertical gap between their top and bottom teeth (anterior open bite), may be advised to wear elastics at the front, as shown in this photograph:



4. Patients who have gaps between the back teeth, to help improve settling of the bite:



5. Patients who have undergone jaw surgery: **Patients post-surgery MUST be in contact with their orthodontist**, who will advise on elastic wear and regime.

What to do if you have any concerns about your elastic wear

If you run out of elastics or have any concerns about your elastic wear during this Covid-19 pandemic, it is advisable to contact your orthodontist via telephone so that appropriate individual tailored advice can be given.

They may even ask you to send up-to-date photographs/videos of your teeth and bite, so these can also be assessed. They should then be able to advise whether you need to continue your elastic wear, reduce the amount of wear, or whether you can stop wearing them.

Your orthodontic provider may be able to post out some more elastics to you or you may have to purchase them from an online retailer such as Amazon.

If for some reason, you are unable to contact your orthodontist during this pandemic, we offer the following generic advice and recommendations regarding elastic wear:

For patients undergoing routine orthodontic treatment, the aim is to achieve an ideal bite where the upper front teeth are 2-3mm ahead of the lower front teeth when biting together and there is approximately 1/3rd vertical overlap of the lower incisors, as shown in the following photographs:



At start of treatment Gap = 5-6mm



Ideal position Gap = 1-2mm from the side and front



DO NOT LET YOUR TEETH CROSS OVER



NB: If you are wearing elastics (diagonal elastics between the top and bottom teeth), and feel you are close to achieving this result, consider stopping or reducing your elastic wear to night-time only until you are next seen. Contact your orthodontist. If you are unsure of any of this advice you could simply stop wearing your elastics. Your treatment may have a short pause but it will not affect the ultimate result.

How to assess your bite:

Curl your tongue to the back of your mouth at the top and bite your teeth together (this will put your jaw in a consistent and correct position)

- 1) For patients who started with their top teeth sticking out, if you feel that the horizontal gap between the upper and lower incisors is reduced significantly, and the upper and lower incisors are biting on top of each other and you can't get the lower teeth behind the uppers at all or the bite is reversed, stop wearing your elastics immediately and contact your orthodontist.
- 2) If you notice a vertical gap increasing between your upper and lower teeth over time due to prolonged elastic wear, stop wearing your elastics immediately and contact your orthodontist.
- 3) For patients who started with a reverse bite, if you feel that the horizontal gap between the upper and lower incisors is increasing, and the top teeth are starting to stick out, stop wearing the elastics immediately and contact your orthodontist.
- 4) If you have been wearing elastics and notice the teeth are appearing more lopsided, stop wearing your elastics immediately and contact your orthodontist.

Type of elastics and how to find your size

There are various types of elastics of varying tightness. Your orthodontist will advise which elastics are appropriate for your teeth. Some of the elastics have a coloured bag attributed to them, and the different colours correspond to different sized elastics.



If you are unsure of the size of your elastics, this can be found on the packaging as shown

