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SEPARATORS

Teeth normally contact each other very tightly. In order to place braces (bands) around the back teeth, the teeth must be “separated” first to create space allowing for bands to be placed at a subsequent appointment. Separators are made of either RUBBER or METAL. Both materials act by gently wedging the teeth apart. You can brush normally around separators, but do not floss or use toothpicks in the separated areas. Today, the following information will be reviewed:

Question	Item Discussed	Answer
How do you place the separator(s)?		Placement is done with two pieces of floss. You will be shown how to replace these separators and given a backup supply.
What to do if the separator(s) come out?		Once the space has been gained, the separators may fall out. To determine if there is adequate space, check the contact area between the teeth with dental floss. If the teeth are touching tightly (causing the floss to make a snapping sound), you need to replace the separator(s). If not, you may leave the separators out if your appointment is within 1-2 days. If your appointment is more than 2 days away, wait a day and floss again to check the space between the teeth. If separators are needed and you are unable to replace the separators on your own, please contact the office. It is very important that they are in place for your next appointment. If you try to replace the separators, but they keep falling out, this means that you have enough space. This space will begin to close on its own, so wait until 3 to 5 days before your next appointment to replace them. If they are accidentally swallowed, do not be concerned. They are harmless.
Where is/are the separator(s) located?		See locations on the “map” located on the opposite side of this sheet.
Why do you need to replace the separator(s)?		Teeth normally contact each other very tightly. If we are to place braces around the teeth, they must first be separated to allow the band to be placed. It will make your next appointment easier.
Extra supplies		Extra rubber separators have been given to you. Wax will be given if metal separators are placed.
What if your teeth get sore?		Advil or Tylenol are the best choices. Take the maximum dose indicated on the bottle for your age and weight. The soreness generally lasts between one and five days.

If you have the METAL type of separator, a wire loop can be seen on the cheek side of the back teeth. It is normal for this loop to move up and down. If it moves down and pinches the gums, gently move it back to the normal position with your fingernail. It is extremely rare that this type of separator would fall out on its own. There may be some minor cheek or tongue irritation from the sides of this separator. Wax may be used in such instances.

When separated, the teeth will actually move into different positions. When this happens, your "bite" will change and your teeth may feel sore, especially when biting. Advil or Tylenol may be taken if tenderness is moderate to severe. Such soreness should not last longer than three to five days.

Please contact the office if you have any questions about your separators.