



Burkhardt • Pecora orthodontics

Oral Hygiene Alert

We want to inform you of an increasingly serious matter that you should be aware of during your child's orthodontic treatment. There has been a nationwide epidemic of an increased amount of decalcification ("white spots") on the teeth of adolescents likely due to increased consumption of sugary and/or carbonated beverages. Recent studies have shown that the acidity from carbonated beverages can be severely damaging to teeth, as well as sugary drinks and candy. Once the white spots develop on the teeth, the only way to get rid of them is for the dentist to grind them away and then fill them as they would a regular cavity.

The accumulation of food and debris on the teeth, particularly along the gum line (what we term the "danger zone"), fuels the bacteria in the mouth to produce the acid that breaks down the tooth's enamel leading to white spots and cavities. The consistent intake of acidic, carbonated drinks just worsens this breakdown of the enamel. When there are braces on the teeth, there are more nooks and crannies for the bacteria to lodge and cause damage to the teeth.

We ask that you take an active role in helping your child maintain good oral hygiene practices during orthodontic treatment. Please check your child's tooth brushing at least weekly to make sure the teeth are being adequately cleaned and flossed. The doctor and the clinical assistant will monitor oral hygiene at every regular appointment and if the tooth brushing is not going as well as it should, we will be sending a letter to the dentist to help monitor the oral hygiene and will be sending a copy of it to you. We feel it is critical to keep the dentist involved in the care of the patient, particularly when it comes to the oral hygiene and long term health of the teeth and the gums.

If you have any questions or need more information regarding proper tooth brushing or proper care of the braces, please don't hesitate to call us at the office or visit the oral hygiene portion of our web site, www.okemosortho.com.

We look forward to working with you and your child to achieve the best smile possible.