

# STRATHCONA ORTHODONTICS ORAL HYGIENE PROTOCOL

## 4 STRIKES AND THEY'RE OFF!

It is of paramount importance to practice excellent oral hygiene. During orthodontic treatment it is essential to remove all plaque and food off the teeth and braces. The enamel is damaged when plaque and food remain on the teeth for a prolonged period of time. This results in decalcification, permanent stains and/or cavities. As well, gum disease develops, causing inflammation of the gum tissue and even bone loss. Excellent oral hygiene is necessary to maintain the integrity of the enamel and supporting tissue. All patients are shown proper oral hygiene techniques when they start treatment.

Patients are educated about our oral hygiene protocol. It is activated when patients have difficulty keeping their teeth and braces clean. At the beginning of each appointment, patients are rated on their oral hygiene. We assign each patient a value from 1-5, (1 very poor and 5 excellent.) If the assigned value is **3 or less**, the patient will again be shown how to brush and floss correctly.

At any subsequent appointment, when the oral hygiene is rated 3 or less, the Oral Hygiene Program will be implemented.

The steps that will be followed are:

1. Photographs will be taken.
2. Brushing and flossing techniques will be reviewed.
3. The patient will be sent to brush and floss.
4. If plaque and/or food remain on the teeth, the teeth will be disclosed to color plaque and food.
5. We will not perform the scheduled treatment at this visit, as chair time has been used for oral hygiene instruction.
6. The patient's dentist will be sent a letter to notify him/her of the oral hygiene status. It will be necessary to schedule a thorough cleaning and check-up with your dentist.

If four ratings of 3 or less are earned, **the braces will be removed**. Poor oral hygiene slows down tooth movement and it is not in the best interest of the patient to continue orthodontic treatment at the expense of his or her oral health. Our financial coordinator will review fees if the braces are removed.

We are confident that superb oral hygiene can be achieved if we work together.