



## To our valued patients at Shakespeare Orthodontics:

These are unprecedented times and we hope that you are keeping well and being kind to each other. The Dental Council of New Zealand (DCNZ), the New Zealand Dental Association (NZDA) together with the Ministry of Health (MoH) have reiterated the New Zealand Government's decision that all non-essential and elective dental services be suspended immediately to reduce the risk of further community spread of COVID-19.

Undoubtedly, given the restriction of contact we are all now experiencing, you may have some questions about how this COVID-19 pandemic affects your orthodontic treatment. Our team has put together these FAQs for you to refer to when you need some information on your orthodontic treatment. Please be assured that we continue to be dedicated to your orthodontic care and, most importantly, your health and safety.

## How long will our office be on a limited and modified schedule?

We are currently rebooking our patients in treatment for 6-8 weeks' time. For recall visits or retention checks, we are rebooking for around 6 months' time. As you will be aware, this is an evolving situation, so we will continue to follow and support the instructions we are given by the MoH over the coming weeks.

During this time, we promise to be transparent and to update you of the next steps should there be any changes to the above. Our team will be available **Monday to Friday 8.30am-5pm** by email predominantly – [admin@Shakespeareortho.co.nz](mailto:admin@Shakespeareortho.co.nz). Please only contact us by phone for emergency concerns so that our phone lines are available to patients who most need it for those urgent issues.



## **Why do orthodontic practices need to close?**

Always, our primary concern is the health and safety of our patients, staff, and wider community. As mentioned, the MoH, DCNZ and the NZDA have declared that all non-essential and elective dental services, including orthodontic services, are to be suspended immediately. While we are at COVID-19 Alert Level 4, we will continue to run a strictly modified and restricted appointment schedule.

## **What should I do if I have braces on?**

We want you to have the best treatment outcome possible. To achieve this, you need to keep up excellent oral hygiene practices and minimise breakages as much as possible. We would strongly recommend the following:

1. Brushing and flossing at least two times a day.
2. Avoid eating unfavourable foods (hard/sticky/crunchy) to avoid breakages.
3. If wearing elastics, continue to do so as directed. Please remember to wash your hands before placing and removing your elastics. If you run out of elastics, please email us. We may ask you to take some progress photos with a phone camera so we can assess how to proceed. We will endeavour to send you more elastics when we can – this may not be immediately.

Please do not add this to your worries during these challenging times – your treatment will continue to be advanced when we are able to attend appointments at the practice.

## **What should I do if I have Invisalign aligners?**

Please continue wearing the active aligners you have been allocated, as instructed. This will ensure the progression of your treatment. Remember to keep using your chewies to help seat the aligners properly. If you no longer have aligners to continue to your next week, it is perfectly fine to reduce your last aligner wear to 12 hours a day to maintain the teeth in the current position. Remember to keep your aligners clean and avoid all drinks other than water while you are wearing them. See 'How do I clean my aligners, appliances, retainers, or elastics?' below for further advice.



## **What should I do with my plate/s?**

If you have a removable appliance (plate) or a twin-block appliance, you should continue to wear it as instructed. Remember to wash your hands thoroughly before placing and after removing the appliance. Keep the appliance clean with a diluted solution of soap and water. An old toothbrush is ideally used with this solution. We will monitor your progress with the appliance at your next appointment.

## **What should I do if I am about to start treatment?**

We are excited about creating a beautiful smile for all our patients and we look forward to starting your treatment as soon as we can. We will confirm the appointment made for you closer to the time of resuming regular in-clinic reviews, i.e. at a lower COVID-19 Alert Level. We cannot wait to see you in the clinic!

## **What should I do if I have a recall appointment or new consultation coming up?**

These appointments are important, and we look forward to seeing you in the practice soon. However, the nature of these appointments is considered elective at a time like this. Rest assured though, that we will maintain all appointment records and will reschedule them at the earliest appropriate time as soon as we can.

## **How do I clean my aligners, appliances, retainers and elastics?**

It is important to keep wearing all the above appliances as instructed to maintain treatment progress and to retain your beautiful teeth with your retainers. Follow these recommendations for aligners, appliances, retainers, and elastics:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before placing and after removing your aligners, appliances, retainers or elastics.
- Clean the item in a diluted soap and water solution – an old toothbrush is ideal for this purpose.
- After cleaning, rinse in cold water to minimise the soapy taste.



## What should I do if I have a broken retainer, aligner or appliance?

It is always important to wear your retainers after your treatment is complete and to wear your aligners and appliances to progress treatment. Please email us and someone will contact you in a timely manner to assess your case and will let you in detail how we can help you to continue with the progression of your treatment.

We will again reiterate: please avoid calling us so that the phone line is left available to emergencies only.

## What should I do if I have a poking wire or other irritation?

As explained above, orthodontic services are suspending during Alert Level 4; however, we completely understand that orthodontic treatment can cause irritation and discomfort, especially when there is a breakage. Please email us your concerns, letting us know where the wire/bracket is causing the irritation – we would be grateful if you are able to email us photos of the problem area, so that we are able to address the problem appropriately. One of our orthodontists will be in touch with you promptly to ensure that a solution is found. Most situations do have an easy fix at home.

To stay updated on how our practice is responding to the changing situation and to find further resources on your orthodontic treatment, you can follow us on Facebook or visit our website, where we will be posting updates regularly.

**Our website:** [www.shakespeareortho.co.nz](http://www.shakespeareortho.co.nz)  
**SO Takapuna Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/ShakespeareOrthoTakapuna/](https://www.facebook.com/ShakespeareOrthoTakapuna/)  
**SO Epsom Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/ShakespeareOrthoEpsom/](https://www.facebook.com/ShakespeareOrthoEpsom/)

Thank you for your understanding and we are truly grateful you have chosen to support our business. We wish you all good health and look forward to seeing you again in person soon.

From Azza, Mo and the team at Shakespeare Orthodontics