

PATIENT GUIDE

Braces coming off: what to expect

The debond visit step by step, what your teeth feel like afterwards, and what comes next. · 30 Aug 2026

The day the braces come off is one of the best appointments in orthodontics. It takes a little under an hour: brackets off, glue polished away, a scan for retainers, photos, and retainers fitted or booked. Your teeth feel smooth and strangely large for a day, and then it all feels normal.

The debond visit

1. Brackets off

Each bracket is squeezed gently and lifts away. It feels like pressure, not pain, and takes a few minutes for the whole mouth.

2. Polishing

The small patches of glue are polished off the enamel. This is the longest part and the surface is checked carefully afterwards.

3. Scan and photos

A digital scan of the finished teeth for your retainers, and a set of photographs to match the ones we took at the start.

4. Retainers

A bonded retainer may be fitted the same day. Removable retainers are either fitted now or at a short visit within a week or two, depending on how they are made.

Afterwards

Teeth feel slippery and slightly sensitive to cold for a few days. The gums may look a little puffy where brackets were and settle within a week or two with good brushing. Eat whatever you like, straight away, with the one exception of anything that could damage a new bonded retainer (see that guide).

Book a check with your dentist for a clean and a look over the enamel; we will send them a note about what we did.

What comes next

Retention. Retainers hold the teeth while the bone and gums settle, which takes a year or more, and then at night long term. The retainer guides in this library cover wearing, cleaning and what to do if one is lost. Retention is the part of treatment that keeps the result, so we will see you for retainer checks over the next couple of years.

The braces did the moving. The retainers keep the finish.