

PATIENT GUIDE

Elastics: the parent guide

Braces straighten. Elastics set the bite. How to make the daily change a habit rather than a battle. · 31 Aug 2026

The wire lines the teeth up, but the elastics decide how the top and bottom actually meet. They only move things while they are in, which is where a little backup at home makes all the difference. This stage is the one most often stretched by weeks of half-wear, and the one where a quiet routine at home shortens treatment most.

What good wear looks like

- In 24 hours a day, unless your orthodontist says otherwise.
- Out only for meals and toothbrushing.
- A fresh pair at least once a day.

How to help at home

- Keep spare packs in the school bag, bathroom and car.
- Tie the daily change to a routine, like brushing at night.
- Low-key reminders beat nagging; the goal is habit.
- Take a photo of the pattern we drew, so anyone at home can check the hooks.

Completely normal

- Tender teeth for the first two to three days; it settles.
- A slight lisp or extra saliva on day one.
- A mild ache after a pattern change means they are working.
- The odd snapped band. A new one goes on.

Message us if

- They are running low on bands; we will sort more.
- A hook or bracket breaks, or bands keep snapping.
- Discomfort lasts beyond a few days.
- And please: never double up unless we have said to.

Call us on (09)520 1880 or email hello@milkkorthodontics.co.nz.

Common questions

They take them out at school and forget. What helps?

A pack in the pencil case and a rule of "back on before you leave the table". Most teenagers manage it within a week once it is tied to lunch rather than left to memory.

Does night-only wear count?

Only if we have said so. Most patterns need full-time wear; night-only does about a third of the work and the stage drags on for months.

Steady wear at home is what finishes the smile. Thanks for being on the team.