

PATIENT GUIDE

Discomfort: what is normal and what helps

The ache after braces go on or an aligner changes is teeth moving. Here is how long it lasts and what settles it. · 31
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Tender teeth after braces are fitted, after an adjustment, or on the first day of a new aligner are the sign that teeth are moving. The ache peaks on day two, fades by day three or four, and is gone within a week. Soft food, cold water and time do almost all of the work.

2 days to the peak

The second day is usually the most tender. It eases from there.

5 days, then it settles

By the end of the first week, most people are eating normally again.

0 sign of a problem

Tenderness on biting is expected. Sharp pain from one spot, or pain that grows after a week, is worth a message.

What helps

- Soft food for the first day or two: pasta, soup, eggs, smoothies, yoghurt, mashed potato. Chew at the back rather than biting with the front teeth.
- Cold water and cold food. A cold drink held in the mouth for a moment takes the edge off tender teeth.
- Warm salt-water rinses (a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water) two or three times a day for any sore patches on the cheeks or gums.
- Wax over any bracket or wire that is rubbing. The ulcer guide has the technique.
- Chewing cushions, if we gave you some with aligners: a few minutes of gentle biting seats the tray and eases the pressure.
- Keep wearing what we asked you to wear. Taking elastics or aligners out to rest the teeth makes the next hours more tender, not less.

What it feels like

A dull ache and a feeling that the teeth are slightly loose. Biting into anything firm is the moment you notice it most. Some people feel it more in the front teeth, some in the back. It is not sharp and it does not throb; if it does, something else is going on and we want to know.

Message us if

- Discomfort is severe, or is getting worse rather than better after day three.
- One tooth hurts sharply, especially to touch or to hot and cold.
- A sore spot on the cheek or gum has not settled after a few days of salt-water rinses and wax.
- Anything about the appliance feels loose, poking or wrong.

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

Common questions

Can I take something for it?

Ask your pharmacist or doctor what suits you; they know your history, and we leave that advice to them.

Why does every adjustment ache a bit?

Each new wire or aligner starts a fresh round of movement. It is usually a milder version of the first week, lasting a day or two.

It gets easier every day, and week one is the worst of it.