

PATIENT GUIDE

Ulcers, rubbing and wax

Why lips and cheeks get rubbed in the first weeks, how to use wax properly, and how to settle an ulcer. · 30 Aug 2026

Lips and cheeks are meeting brackets for the first time, and until they toughen up over a couple of weeks they can rub raw in a spot or two. Wax over the bracket stops the rubbing; warm salt-water rinses settle the sore spot. After the first fortnight the mouth adapts and this mostly stops happening.

Using wax

1. Find the culprit

Run your tongue or a clean finger along the braces. The bracket or wire end that catches is the one to cover.

2. Dry it

Dab the bracket with a tissue. Wax does not stick to a wet surface.

3. Roll and press

Pinch off a pea-sized piece, roll it into a ball, and press it firmly over the bracket so it flattens into a smooth bump.

4. Replace as needed

It comes off with eating and brushing. Put a fresh piece on. Swallowing a bit is harmless.

Settling an ulcer

Rinse with warm salt water two or three times a day, keep wax over whatever caused it, and avoid sharp, salty or acidic foods for a day or two. Most ulcers from rubbing heal in three to five days. A pharmacist can suggest a soothing gel if you would like one.

Good to know

- Keep a pack of wax in every bag and by the bed. Ask us for more whenever you run low.
- A wire end poking after an adjustment can be waxed until we trim it; message us if it is sore rather than just annoying.
- Small white marks on the inside of the lips or cheeks are toughened skin, not a problem.

Message us if

- An ulcer has not settled after a week.
- A wire is poking and wax is not enough.
- The same spot keeps rubbing raw. We can adjust the bracket or the wire.

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