

PATIENT GUIDE

What counts as an emergency, and what can wait

Real orthodontic emergencies are rare. Here is how to tell one from a problem that waits for a repair visit. · 31 Aug 2026

Almost everything that goes wrong with braces, aligners or retainers is a nuisance rather than an emergency: wax tonight, a message to us, and a short visit within the week. A few things need attention the same day, and one or two need a doctor or a hospital before they need us. This guide sorts them.

Straight to a doctor or an emergency department

- Difficulty breathing or swallowing, or a part of an appliance that has been inhaled.
- A blow to the face with a suspected broken jaw: the teeth no longer meet as they did, or the jaw cannot open or close.
- Facial swelling that is spreading, with fever, or that makes it hard to open the mouth. That is an infection and needs a dentist or doctor today.
- Uncontrolled bleeding from the mouth that pressure does not stop within twenty minutes.

Message or call us today

- A tooth knocked out, knocked loose or pushed out of position. See the knocks guide: a knocked-out permanent tooth is a race against the clock.
- Severe pain from one tooth, or pain that is worsening after a week.
- A wire that has come completely out and cannot be covered or bent away from the cheek.
- A swallowed part with any coughing or chest discomfort (see a doctor first).
- An appliance, expander or bonded retainer that has come off completely.

Message us, and we will book a repair within the week

- A loose or lost bracket, band or attachment.
- A poking wire that wax covers.
- A cracked or lost aligner or retainer. Wear the previous set or spare meanwhile.
- A broken elastic hook, or running out of elastics.
- An ulcer that is not settling after a few days of salt-water rinses.

Wait for your next visit

- A coloured tie that has come off.

- Mild tenderness after an adjustment or a new aligner.
- A rough spot on a bracket that wax sorts out.
- A question about wear time or the schedule: message us any time, but nothing is lost by asking at the visit.

How to reach us

A message with a photo tells us most of what we need to know and lets us book the right length of visit. Outside our hours, leave a message and we will pick it up first thing; for anything in the first list above, do not wait for us.

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

If in doubt, message us. A quick question is never a bother.