



BRENT HOGGAN ORTHODONTICS

## SEPARATORS

**Description:** Separators, or spacers, are tiny elastic rings or wedges that are placed between the teeth in order to create a small amount of space.

**Purpose:** Separators make it possible to place metal bands on the teeth as needed for braces or other orthodontic appliances, such as expanders or space maintainers.

**What to Expect:** Often, separators will initially feel like they are a little bit high, meaning that you will bite on them after they are first placed. As the teeth move, the separators will settle in between the teeth. Soreness when you bite is common with spacers, usually beginning several hours after they are placed, and lasting 2 to 4 days. The peak of soreness is about 24 hours after the spacers have been placed. Also, subtle changes in the bite may be noticed as the separators create a little bit of space.

**Care Instructions:** You should brush as you normally do, and floss everywhere except the contact area where the separators have been placed. You cannot eat sticky candy or chew any gum, since these will cause the separators to come out. After a few days, when you no longer feel the separators, it is a good idea to check each night to make sure they are still in place.

**Possible Issues:** The most common complaint from patients with separators is soreness when chewing. This can be decreased by taking ibuprofen (e.g., Advil or Motrin), acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol), or naproxen (e.g., Aleve) according to the recommended dose. The other possible issue is a separator coming out prematurely. It is important to not pick at the spacer, to be careful when flossing, and to avoid sticky candy, but sometimes a separator will simply fall out on its own. If a separator does come out before your next appointment, please give our office a call, since we may need to replace it.

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