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## **What is an orthodontic headgear?**

Orthodontic headgear is one of the orthodontic appliances, which is attached to the braces, and help in correcting the bite problems. It hold backs the growth of upper jaw, creating enough room for the lower jaw to grow. Face bows or metal hooks are used to attach the headgear to the braces, which is anchored at the neck or back of the head with head-caps or straps. Sometimes elastic bands are also used to apply some pressure to hold back the growth of the upper teeth.

## **Parts of orthodontic headgear:**

Face-bow: It has a metal bow, which is attached to the braces. The strap is anchored behind the back of the neck or the head to get the desired amount of pressure for holding back the growth of the teeth.

## **Wearing / Caring for Your Headgear:**

Headgear treatment is used for patients where the upper teeth or jaw are too far forward. Because the headgear tends to retard or hold back the upper jaw in its forward growth, it allows the lower jaw to catch up simply by developing at its natural rate during the period of active facial growth. For patients who are not growing, the headgear is used to help hold the molars back as the front teeth are being pulled back.

Please read the following instructions for wear of your headgear.

You have now been fitted with your headgear, and this step begins an important part of your treatment. The headgear should be worn faithfully as instructed in order that we might achieve maximum correction of your teeth. Here is some information regarding your headgear:

1. When placing or removing the facebow (the wire part) use patience and gentle force. This will prevent loosening the cement and the band that is attached to your teeth

2. Wear the headgear fourteen hours during each twenty four hour day unless you have been told otherwise. Wear the headgear all night and every night! If you must miss a night, you will be expected to make up those hours on the weekend.

It is very important that a person wearing the headgear should try and maintain a log of how many hours he wears it on during the day and night, and a 'score card' could be used.

3. Some temporary discomfort may be experienced during the first night or two. Molar teeth may become tender and even a little loose. Falling asleep may be difficult, so take some pain medication if you wish. Teeth will also be sore for a few minutes after removing the headgear in the morning.

4. Do not wear your headgear while engaging in "rough-housing", playing, driving, biking, skating or active sports. Serious damage could result to your face and jaw. The headgear should be removed while the straps have not been unfastened, and should be lifted over the face to take it off. If the right instructions are not followed, and if it's taken off carelessly, one may injure cheeks, lips, eyes, and face. Proper precautions should be taken. It should not be pulled or grabbed by anybody, siblings or friends, by mistake. Sometimes the outcome could be very severe.
5. Bring your headgear to every appointment, even emergency appointments, so that it can be adjusted.
6. Use the case provided to store your headgear and bring it to our office.
7. Please write your name, address, and phone number on your case so that it can be returned to you if lost.
8. The headgear straps are fitted at first with very light forces. If it is too loose and comes off, you may tighten it by wearing the strap on the righter notch.

At first, the headgear might look a little strange and it also gives an uncomfortable feeling for the user. Nevertheless, a little discomfort and embarrassment are worth the beautiful smile one would wear down the future. There would be no hesitation when one would have to say 'cheese.'