



# GREAT SMILES

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY & ORTHODONTICS

## Headgear

Headgear is an appliance that is sometimes used in orthodontic treatment to correct problems with your bite. Headgear puts pressure on your upper jaw and teeth. This moves or holds them so they can align with your lower jaw and teeth. There are two common types of headgear that are used in orthodontics:

**Neck Strap (cervical) Headgear** - This headgear is an appliance that slows the growth of the upper jaw or pushes the upper teeth back.

**Reverse-Pull (face mask) Headgear** - This headgear is an appliance that pushes against the chin and forehead and pulls the upper jaw and teeth forward.

Headgear can work in several different ways. By using your head or neck as an anchor, the strap or elastic band puts steady pressure on your upper jaw. Over time, this pressure moves your upper jaw in line with your lower jaw.

For the first few days after initial placement, you may experience discomfort or tenderness with your teeth. If you wear your headgear consistently, any discomfort will be minimized and your teeth will move faster. Our doctors recommend taking Tylenol or Motrin every 4-6 hours for the first few days as needed for discomfort or tenderness. Our doctors request you wear your headgear at least 12 hours a day – you do not need to wear the headgear to school or to outside functions. Do not wear your headgear while playing sports or any other similar physical activity. Serious damage could result in your face and jaw. When removing headgear, always remove the strap first when taking off your headgear, and don't force your headgear or yank on it.

Remember to remove headgear when eating, and always brush headgear with toothpaste and water, do not soak in any cleaning solutions. You may wash the straps with soap and water and lay flat to dry.

Always remember to bring headgear to your orthodontic appointments; adjustments may need to be made. If you have any questions or concerns about your headgear, please contact our office.



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