

## **HANDLING ORTHODONTIC EMERGENCIES DURING OFFICE CLOSURES:**

We hope that none of our patients experience an orthodontic emergency during office closures, but occasionally, they do happen. We will be available via our emergency phone line for situations that are deemed necessary by our team members to require immediate assistance.

There are typically two types of emergencies: direct injuries to the teeth and supporting tissues and issues associated with your orthodontic appliances. Below you will find some helpful tips on what you can do should an emergency occur.

### **Direct injuries to the teeth and supporting tissues:**

Following a direct injury to the mouth or teeth, whether undergoing orthodontic care or not, you should be seen by your general dentist as soon as possible. Your dentist will most likely take an x-ray of the affected area and determine whether teeth have been fractured. If a tooth is knocked out, place the lost tooth immediately into the floor of the mouth or into a cup of milk for transit to your dentist's office. If necessary, your dentist will contact our office to coordinate appropriate care for your injury. If your general dentist did not contact us during your visit, please call us on our emergency phone line immediately following your dental appointment.

If you are unable to reach your dentist or an alternative emergency facility, please call us. Although we may not have the appropriate materials available to treat your entire injury, we will do our best to work with you to reach the best possible solution.

### **Issues related to orthodontic appliances:**

Broken and disturbed orthodontic appliances occur from time to time. If bands, brackets, or wires become loose and/or painful, or you have issues with your removable appliances, please call our emergency phone line so we can assess the severity of the problem and appropriately schedule an appointment for repair. *Please note that not all issues require an immediate visit to the office.* We will talk through the issue with you and determine if it needs to be addressed immediately or if it should be scheduled for repair once our office re-opens in January. Below are some suggestions we might give you to help ease the discomfort.

**Loose band or bracket:** A loose band or bracket can generally be left in place as long as it is not causing too much discomfort to the lips or cheeks. Placing orthodontic wax over the loose band or bracket can help ease the discomfort of it moving around and help keep it in place until it can be repaired.

**Loose or poking "wire" tie:** If you have a loose or poking wire tie, you can use an eraser at the end of a pencil, a Q-Tip, or the rounded end of a spoon to try and push the wire tie back into place. You may also place orthodontic wax over the wire to help keep it in place until it can be repaired.

**Loose or displaced wire:** Sometimes wires will slide from side to side and may start to poke your cheek. If the wire is poking, you can clip the end that is poking with a heavy duty nail clipper or you can place orthodontic wax over it until it can be repaired.

**EMERGENCY PHONE LINE: 206-225-7709.** You can call or text this number. Please leave the patient's full name, a brief description of your emergency issue, and a call back number.