

White Spot Lesions

What they are, why they happen, and how to keep them from happening to you.



The day the braces came off. Every chalky white patch is a spot where plaque sat against the enamel and pulled the minerals out of it. The braces did not cause this. Plaque did.

What you are looking at

Those white marks are **white spot lesions** — the first stage of a cavity. Plaque left on a tooth makes acid, and the acid dissolves minerals out of the enamel underneath it. What is left is enamel that has lost its glassy surface, so it scatters light and looks chalky.

Braces do not damage teeth. They just add about a dozen new corners a toothbrush does not naturally reach.

These do not wash off, and toothpaste will not remove them. Some fade over the months after the braces come off. Many do not. The deeper ones are permanent, and fixing those takes dental treatment, not brushing.

1 in 3

patients in braces gets at least one white spot lesion

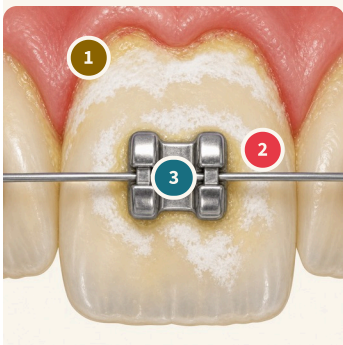
4 weeks

is all it takes for demineralization to begin

2 × 2 min

of proper daily brushing prevents nearly all of it

Where they start



1 Plaque collects here

Yellow plaque packs along the gumline and rings all four edges of the bracket.

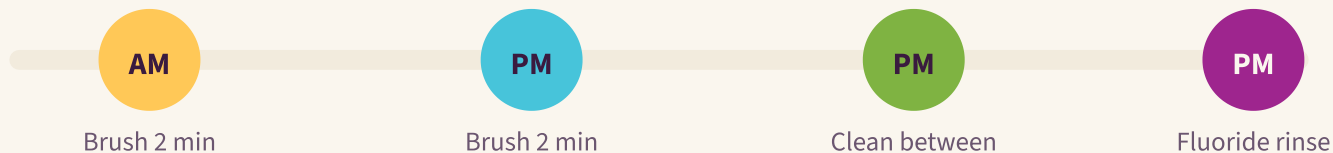
2 This is what it leaves

Acid from that plaque pulls minerals out of the enamel, leaving a chalky white halo ringing the bracket.

3 The bracket hides it

Damage under and around the bracket stays invisible until the braces come off.

Your day, start to finish



1. **Brush two minutes, twice a day** with fluoride toothpaste. Two minutes is far longer than it feels — use a timer or a song.
2. **Aim the bristles at the gumline.** Point them where the bracket meets the gum and use small circles. Brush above the bracket and below it separately.
3. **Clean between the teeth once a day** with a threader, superfloss, or proxy brush.
4. **Fluoride rinse at bedtime** — spit, but do not rinse with water afterward.
5. **Cut how often you sip sugary or sour drinks**, not just how much. Sipping soda all afternoon is far worse than drinking it in ten minutes.

Tools worth owning

All available over the counter. You do not need every one — the first three do the heavy lifting.

 DAILY Proxy brush A tiny cone brush that slides under the wire and around every bracket. The single most useful add-on with braces.	 2× A DAY Electric toothbrush The small round head makes the gumline angle easy to hold, and the timer settles the two-minute argument.	 DAILY Superfloss + threader The stiff end threads under the archwire; the spongy middle cleans the wide space beside each bracket.
 NIGHTLY Fluoride rinse 0.05% sodium fluoride. Swish at bedtime and spit — do not rinse with water, so it stays on overnight.	 WEEKLY Disclosing tablets Chew one and the plaque you missed turns bright pink. The fastest honest check on your brushing.	 OPTIONAL Water flosser Good for flushing food out from around brackets. Use it as well as brushing and flossing, never instead.

Already see white spots? Tell us. Do not bleach or scrub them, and do not start a high-strength fluoride product on your own — concentrated fluoride can lock a lesion in permanently. We check every bracket at each visit and can treat what we find.



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