

# Caring for your soft bite raising appliance (BRA): advice sheet

## Information for patients from the Oral and Maxillofacial Department

A bite raising appliance (BRA) is a long-term treatment that can be used to protect your teeth if you grind/clench your teeth (which can cause damage), or to relieve pressure caused by tension in your jaw (temporomandibular joint or TMJ).

This advice sheet explains how you should look after and clean your bite raiser. If after reading this leaflet you have any further questions, please speak to a member of staff in the department.

### What is a bite raising appliance?

The bite raiser is made from soft vinyl and usually fits over your lower teeth. It is designed to stop your upper and lower teeth from touching when you close your mouth.

### What should I do when I first get my bite raiser?

When you receive your bite raiser we recommend you do the following.

- Rinse it in cold water before you use it.
- Try your new bite raiser, make sure that it fits and is comfortable.
- Wear your new bite raiser during the day for short periods. This will help you get used to its size and shape and the unusual feeling of having it in your mouth.



### How do I look after my bite raiser?

- Your bite raiser is custom made for your mouth only. **Do not share it with others.**
- Make sure your teeth are very clean before using your appliance. If food or plaque is left under the appliance, you are at risk of tooth decay or gum disease. Do not eat or drink (other than water) once it is in place.
- Rinse your bite raiser with cold water before and after you use it. This can help remove loose debris (pieces of food) and plaque.

### How do I clean my bite raiser?

- Your appliance should be cleaned daily when brushing your teeth.
- It can be cleaned using cold water and your toothbrush (one with a soft head or soften the toothbrush with warm water).
- Washing up liquid is a good cleaner for your appliance.
- **Do not use toothpaste to clean your bite raiser.** Toothpastes vary and act as abrasives, which can damage the appliance, reducing how well it works over the long-term.
- **Never wash your bite raiser in hot water.** Hot water will change its shape, and you will be unable to use it. This will happen if you place your appliance near any source of heat such as radiators, open fires, or cookers. Keep your appliance away from heat.
- If your bite raiser is not cleaned it will begin to smell and discolour.
- Always dry your bite raiser thoroughly after cleaning it.

### Where should I keep my bite raiser?

- Never put your bite raiser into a tissue or somewhere a pet or a child can find it.
- We recommend you leave your bite raiser in its box next to your bed.
- Some people leave their bite raiser in their bathroom but you should not do this, as over time the steam will change its shape.
- Keep the bite raiser box clean.

### What are the possible risks and side effects?

- You may find the bite raiser rubs against your gum and causes discomfort. If this happens you can trim the area sparingly with a sharp pair of scissors.
- If you notice your symptoms get worse after the first week, please contact the department for help.
- If cared for correctly, your bite raiser should last one to two years. If you grind your teeth heavily, you may wear through the vinyl, and holes may show on the appliance. If this happens please contact the department on 01233 61 60 45.

### What happens if I lose or damage my bite raiser?

If you damage or break your appliance, please speak to a member of hospital staff about a replacement. Depending on the type of bite raiser you use and how long you have had it, there may be a charge for a new one.

### When will my bite raiser be checked, to see if it still fits?

Always bring your bite raiser to your dental appointments, so your dentist can check if it still fits well.

### What if I have any questions or concerns about my bite raiser?

If you have any questions, please ask a member of staff and we will be more than happy to help.

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)