

TONGUE TAMERS

What is Tongue Thrusting?

Tongue thrusting, is the habit of placing the tongue in the wrong position during swallowing, either too far forward or to the sides. It is estimated that every 24 hours you swallow a total of 1,200 to 2,000 times, with about four pounds of pressure per swallow. This constant pressure of the tongue will force the teeth and arches out of alignment. In addition the pressure exerted while swallowing, nervous thrusting also pushes the tongue against the teeth while it is at rest. This is an involuntary, subconscious habit that is difficult to correct.

What are the Consequences to Tongue Thrusting?

The force of the tongue against the teeth is an important factor in contributing to malformation ("bad bite"). Many orthodontists have had the discouraging experience of completing dental treatment, with great results, only to discover that the patient had a tongue thrust swallowing pattern. This continual pattern will push the teeth out of alignment and reverse the orthodontic work.

Tongue Tamers

Tongue Tamers or Tongue Reminders are usually used behind your front four teeth. They look like mini spikes that help to train and remind your tongue to use the roof of your mouth to swallow instead of pushing against your teeth.



Common Problems

Because they are there to help remind your tongue to stay away from your front teeth, your tongue may feel sore or "raw" when you first get your Tongue Tamers. This is common in the first few weeks. A warm salt water rinse using one tablespoon of salt to one cup of warm water and rinsing for 1-2 minutes will help alleviate initial discomfort.

Tongue tamers are smaller than your orthodontic brackets. Just like orthodontic brackets, you must be careful with what you eat. It is not uncommon for them to be accidentally swallowed as they are not attached to a wire, but bonded to the tooth. This is OK and will not hurt you. Let our office know before your next appointment that it will need to be re-bonded at your next visit.

