

Braces-Friendly Recipes Can Keep Kids Smiling

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(NAPSA)—Most parents would agree that cooking for kids can be difficult, but when children have braces, the task can seem especially daunting. From sore teeth to picky eating habits, finding something that suits everyone in the family can become a real challenge.

“Comfort” is key when preparing holiday goodies, special treats and everyday meals.

“Comfort food takes on a whole new meaning when cooking for children with braces,” says Pamela Waterman, author of “The Braces Cookbook: Recipes You and Your Orthodontist Will Love.” “Whether you have new brackets, elastics, headgear or more, there are great foods you can eat—it just takes some thought.”

According to the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), more than 4 million children and 1 million adults have braces. “Avoiding hard, sticky, crunchy and chewy foods helps to keep braces intact and can make the treatment process flow smoothly,” says Donald R. Joondeph, D.D.S., M.S., an orthodontist and president of the AAO. “Our goal is to create healthy, beautiful smiles. When patients take better care of their braces, they end up with better results.”

One key to braces-friendly cooking is making comparable, “soft” substitutes. For example, Dr. Joondeph suggests serving ground rather than whole meats; preparing cooked vegetables instead of raw vegetables; and substituting favorites like tacos and pizza for similar softer fare, such as burritos or lasagna. “With a little awareness and creativity in the kitchen, eating can still be satisfying and safe,” says Dr. Joondeph.

Dr. Joondeph and the AAO urge patients to steer clear of the following treats, or recipes with



these ingredients: nuts, popcorn, tortilla chips, hard pretzels, ice, all hard candy, jelly beans, licorice, taffy, caramel and other chewy candies. “By following their orthodontist’s guidance on dental hygiene and avoiding certain foods while wearing braces, patients will be on track to a lifetime of healthy teeth and a beautiful smile.”

To help parents and patients, the AAO provides braces-friendly recipes, including:

Quick Cake-Mix Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 box cake mix (any flavor; the size that makes two 9” rounds)**
- 3 eggs**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda**

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients, using an electric mixer until well blended and creamy (about 1 minute).

Using a tablespoon, drop onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake 9 minutes at 350 degrees. Makes about four dozen. Store in a covered container.

Recipe from “The Braces Cookbook” by Pamela Waterman.

Baked Ham n’ Egg Hash-Browns

Ingredients:

- 3 cups frozen shredded hash-brown potatoes, uncooked**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese (you choose, mild or sharp)**
- 1 cup diced cooked ham or shredded deli ham**
- 4 eggs, beaten**
- 1 (12-oz.) can evaporated milk**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt**

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 2-quart casserole. Spoon shredded potatoes on the bottom, then top with the cheese and ham. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, evaporated milk and salt. Pour egg mixture over the ham mixture in casserole.

Bake for 40-45 minutes at 350 degrees; if chilled, bake 55-60 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Serves six.

Recipe from “The Braces Cookbook” by Pamela Waterman.

Parents interested in additional braces-friendly recipes or information on orthodontic treatment and the many benefits of a healthy, beautiful smile can visit www.braces.org. The AAO also provides a toll-free information line at 1-800-STRAIGHT (1-800-787-2444).