

Tweaking orthodontic emergencies with Tweakz

Lou Shuman, DMD, CAGS, CEO and Founder of Cellerant Consulting



Lou Shuman, is the CEO of Cellerant Consulting Group, dentistry's leading corporate incubator and accelerator. He is a venturer in-residence at Harvard's i-Lab, co-founder of LightForce Orthodontics, a member of the Oral Health advisory board and founder of the Cellerant Best of Class Technology Awards. He was selected in 2021 by Global Summits Institute one of the World's Top 100 Doctors.

An orthodontic wire breaks. A rough spot is making a painful gum sore. A broken bracket is rolling around on the wire. The patient calls for an emergency visit, but all it would take is a few tweaks — or Tweakz, a device from OrthoNu, to help patients handle manageable emergencies while reducing emergency office visits.

Dr. Sima Yakoby Epstein, the creator of Tweakz for Braces and Tweaks for Aligners, is a visionary and creative orthodontist who thought that urging patients to use toenail clippers and pliers for braces issues was inappropriate and unhygienic. So, she designed a braces device with four tools to handle emergencies over orthodontic treatment.

1. A distal end cutter made with the same clinical quality used in practice helps by cutting any size of broken wires with more safety. Additionally, the wire cutter holds the cut piece, so it isn't aspirated or swallowed.
2. A dental pick that can open the doors of self-ligating or conventional systems, remove an elastic when broken bracket rolls around the wire, or remove food from brackets after eating.
3. A rubber band applicator that easily removes and replaces rubber bands (elastics).
4. A diamond dental file to smooth down metal or ceramic brackets, hooks, or bands.

These four tools cover the gamut of potential orthodontic emergencies for braces that would become an emergency office visit.

Tweaks for Aligners, a critical and pivotal piece of aligner treatment experience, has similar tools but is adapted for aligner users. One device can remove



any aligner, even with attachments. This avoids not only broken aligners but also broken fingernails. And the other device is designed to remove and replace rubber bands. The diamond file avoids the unhygienic action of borrowing someone's nail file or emery board to smooth a rough spot that could become an emergency visit every two weeks or sooner when they switch the aligners. When food gets caught in tooth crevices after lunch, a meeting, or a class, Tweakz dental pick gets the job done.

Dr. Yakoby Epstein says that most of the tools in current orthodontic goodie bags are not really useful, so she is reinventing the goodie bag with science- and research-driven products, starting with Tweakz, that she envisions will become the new standard of care in this space. Plastic disposables are throwaway items that get distorted and can't be sterilized or reused. But one can clean Tweakz clinical-quality material with an alcohol wipe, soap and water, or the dishwasher.

Besides helping patients, Tweakz potentially adds income by reducing emergency visits. Yakoby Epstein says she and her husband Josh, also an orthodontist, figured that it adds up to \$100 to handle an emergency, so by offering Tweakz as part of the protocol of care, the practitioner is implementing an efficiency while freeing up time previously used for emergencies for new patients. Tweakz can either be added to the patient's goodie bag or sold at the office.

Tweakz is just the beginning of OrthoNu. Eighteen other products are patent pending that will tackle emergencies, discomfort, halitosis, oral hygiene issues, enamel remineralization, whitening and overall health. With her tweaks (or Tweakz), Dr. Yakoby Epstein has already started to achieve her ultimate goal of transforming preventative dental medicine. 

Contact me with your feedback on this new feature at:
tanya@newcom.ca and let's start talking.