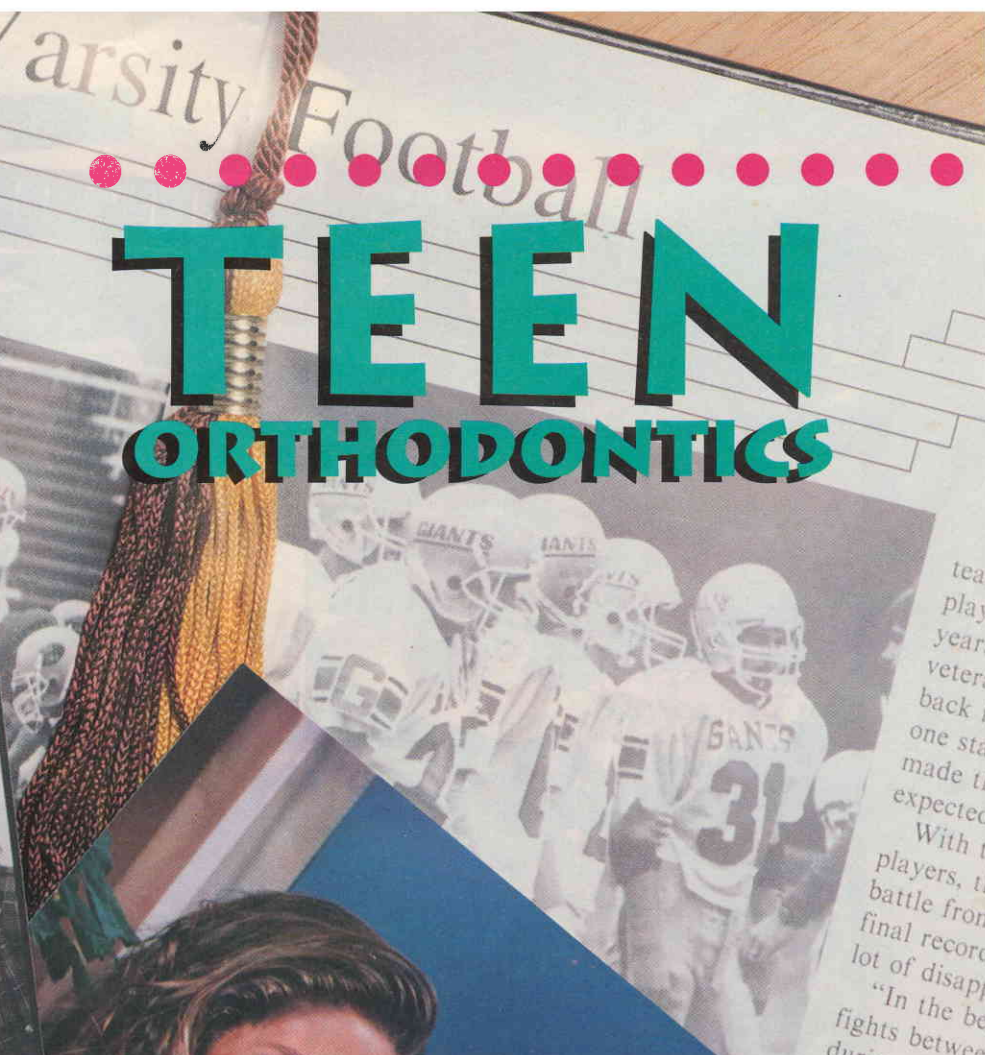
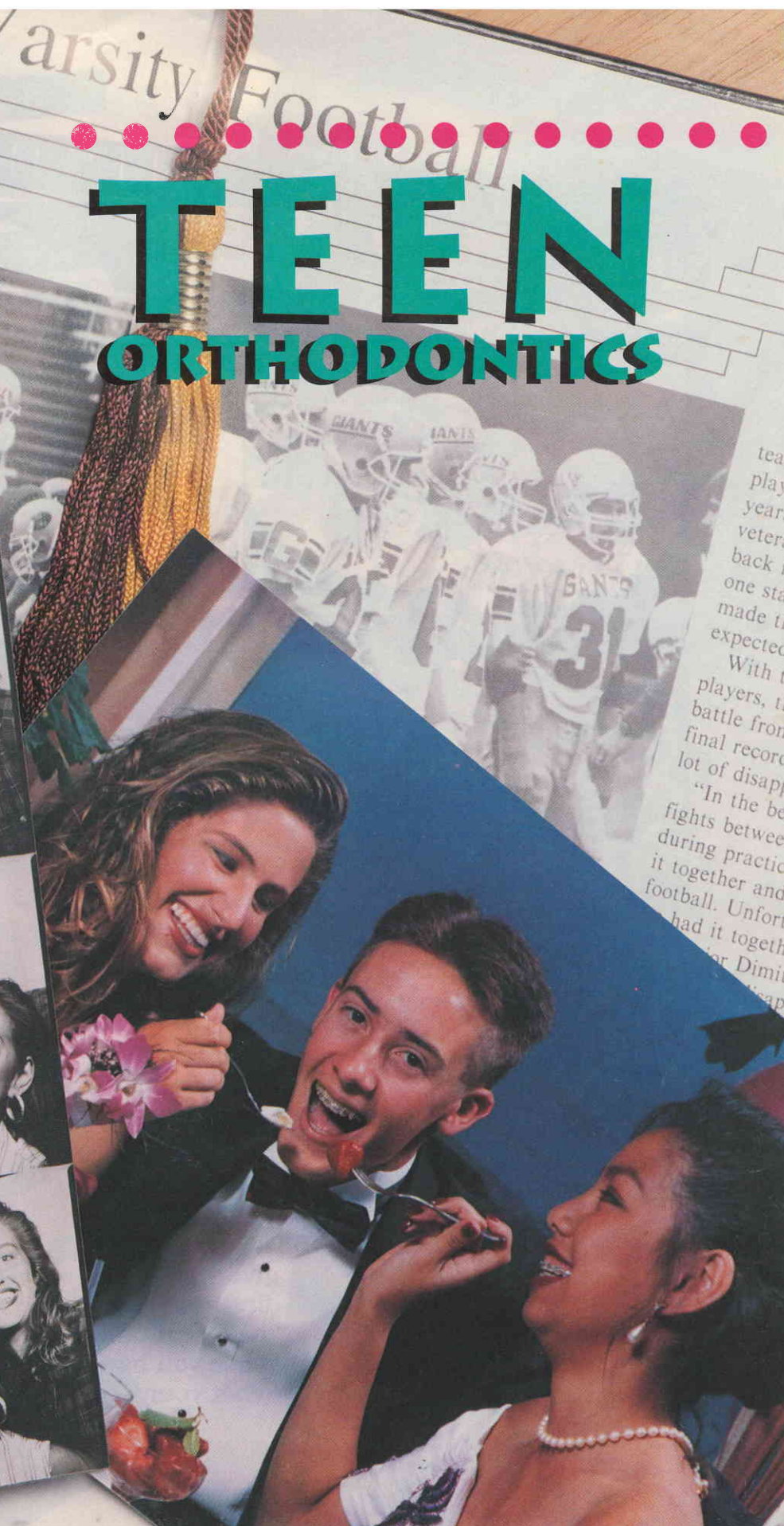


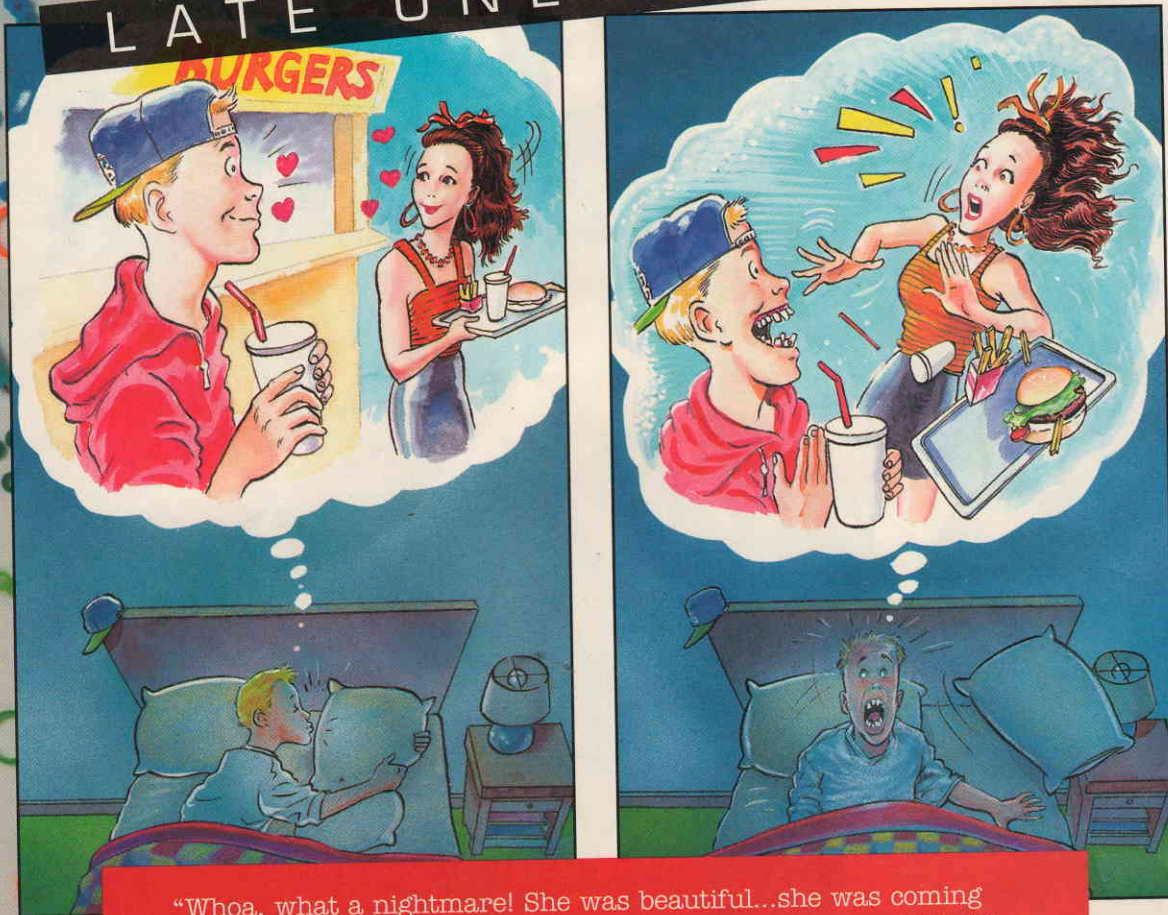
Varsity Football

TEEN ORTHODONTICS



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LATE ONE NIGHT...



"Whoa, what a nightmare! She was beautiful...she was coming my way...it was love at first sight. Then she saw my **TEETH** and it was all over. Help—I need braces."

This booklet is not intended as a substitute for professional orthodontic care.

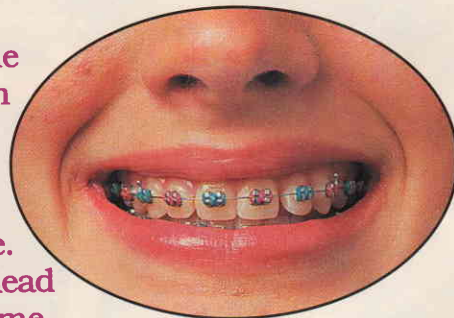
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Before *your* smile gets scary, team up with your orthodontist and get your teeth in shape.

The pages ahead

give you some firsthand tips on life with braces, headgear, and retainers. Just think—once you have great teeth, who knows what your dreams could turn into?



Q's ASK
YOUR
A's ORTHODONTIST



These are some of the questions your orthodontist hears a lot. Feel free to ask your own!

Q *How long do I have to wear this stuff?*

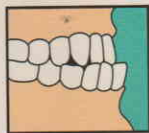
A That depends a lot on you. The better you are about wearing and taking care of your braces, headgear, or retainers, the sooner your teeth will improve.

Q *Will you have to pull any of my teeth?*

A Only if there's not enough room for all of your teeth. But don't worry. If you have teeth pulled, the spaces will be closed. No one will even notice.

Q *What do you mean by malocclusion?*

A A malocclusion simply means that your jaw or your teeth (or both) are in the wrong position.



Your jaw might be too far forward or too far back.



Your teeth might be crooked, tight, or too far apart.

Whatever the problem, your orthodontist can usually help correct it.

Q *Why can't I just get a retainer instead of braces?*

A Retainers don't do the same thing braces do. Braces move teeth into position. Retainers hold them in position, or just move them slightly. Your treatment depends on what your teeth need. If your orthodontist is giving you braces, there's a good reason for it.

Q *Should I wear my headgear when I'm playing basketball?*

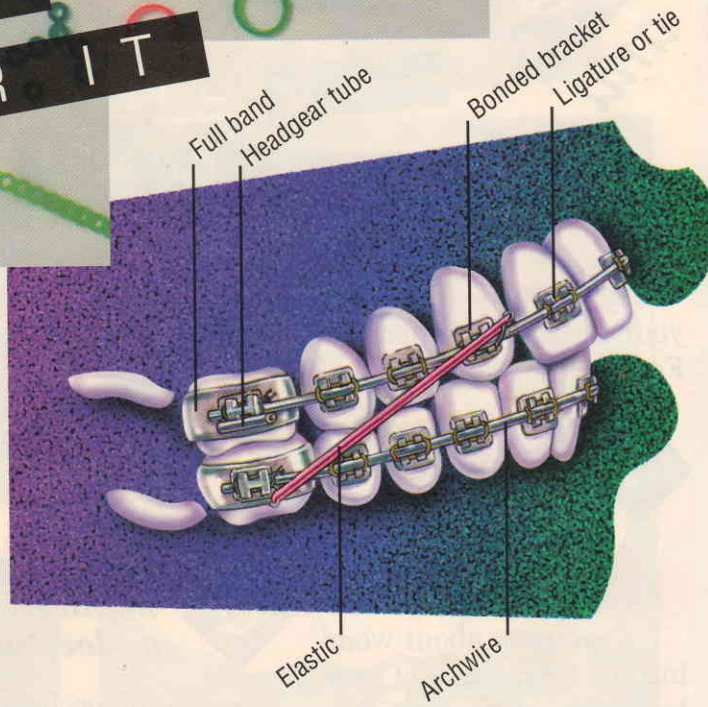
A No. For contact sports or any other rough activities, remove your headgear or retainer. But be sure to wear a mouthguard.



MALOCCLUSION

GRIN AND WEAR IT

Here's the deal—your orthodontist will talk with you about how your teeth or jaws need to be moved. You might need braces, headgear, a positioner, or a retainer. Braces can be silver, clear, or tooth-colored (and you can get elastics or ties in almost any color). After it's all in your mouth, what's next? Just wear your stuff right, clean it well, go to your appointments, and get ready for a great-looking smile.



BIG ON BRACES



"The first thing I thought was, 'Can I still play the sax?' No problem. My braces felt weird for a little while, but then I got used to them."

TIPS

- ▶ Your teeth might feel a little sore after you get your braces adjusted. Ask your orthodontist about pain relievers that can help.
- ▶ Picking at your braces or biting on things like hard candy or pencils can break your brackets or wires. If you're a nail biter, this is a good time to stop!
- ▶ If any of your wires start sticking out or poking you, put wax around them and give your orthodontist a call.
- ▶ Always keep your teeth and braces sparkling clean, so you don't end up with permanent marks on your teeth.

GETTING INTO GEAR



"I sure didn't want to wear headgear. But now it doesn't really bother me. I just put it on when I get home from school and I leave it on all night."

TIPS

- ▶ Keep your headgear on for as many hours as your orthodontist suggests—even if your teeth feel a little sore. The more you wear it, the less it will bother you.
- ▶ If you sometimes skip wearing your headgear, you'll end up having to wear it longer.
- ▶ Headgear is easy to put on, but you might want to practice in front of a mirror at first. Always undo the straps before sliding the facebow into or out of your mouth.
- ▶ Bring your headgear with you to every appointment, so your orthodontist can adjust it.

RETAINER RAP



"Hey, this retainer stuff is no big deal. You just slip it in and slip it out. You can hardly even tell it's there."

TIPS

- ▶ Whenever you take your retainer out, rinse it off and put it in its case. If you wrap it in a tissue or paper towel, it might end up in the garbage can by mistake.
- ▶ When you first start wearing your retainer, it might seem like you're talking funny. Don't worry. You'll probably feel and sound normal within a few days.
- ▶ Retainers are plastic. That means they can melt. So don't leave yours in a hot or sunny place—and don't clean it in hot water.
- ▶ Every time you brush your teeth, brush your retainer with toothpaste. Soaking it in a denture cleaner once a week is a good idea, too.

HOLD THAT SMILE!

So, how do you keep your mouth healthy and looking good? Just remember a few simple things:

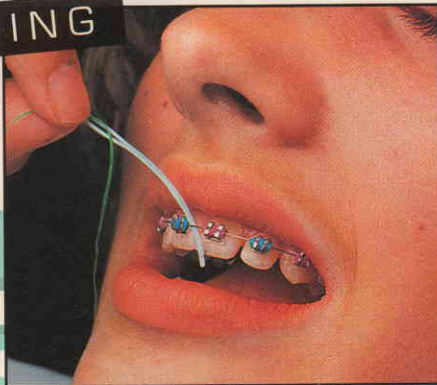
- ▶ Brush after meals. It's the only way to get bacteria off your teeth and braces. And here's a hint for better breath: Brush your tongue, too.
- ▶ Get into the flossing habit—it's one of the best things you can do for your gums. Floss every day to get out all the stuff your toothbrush misses.
- ▶ Last but not least, go easy on the sweets.

If you don't brush...



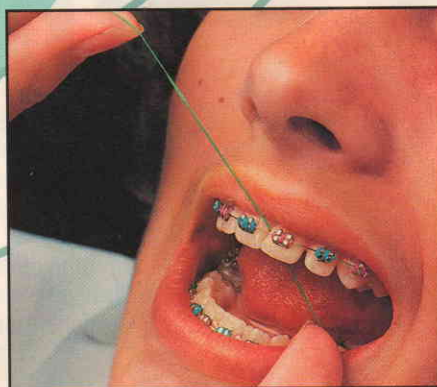
...your teeth could look like this when your braces come off. Yuck.

KEEP FLOSSING



1

Thread the floss through the threader and slip it up behind your archwires. This might seem tricky, but it's easy once you've done it a few times.



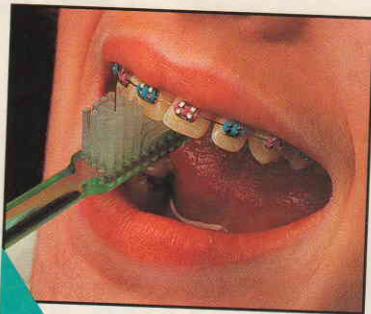
2

Pull the floss between two teeth, work it up under your gum line, and wipe each tooth surface clean. Repeat with all of your teeth. When you're done, rinse your mouth with lots of water.

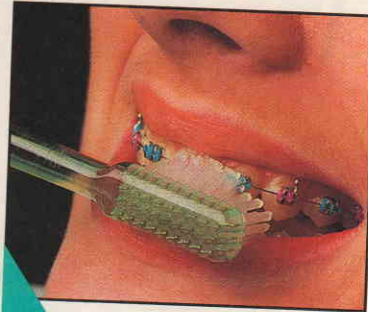
KEEP BRUSHING



Grab a soft brush and some fluoride toothpaste. Brush all surfaces of every tooth and band in your mouth.

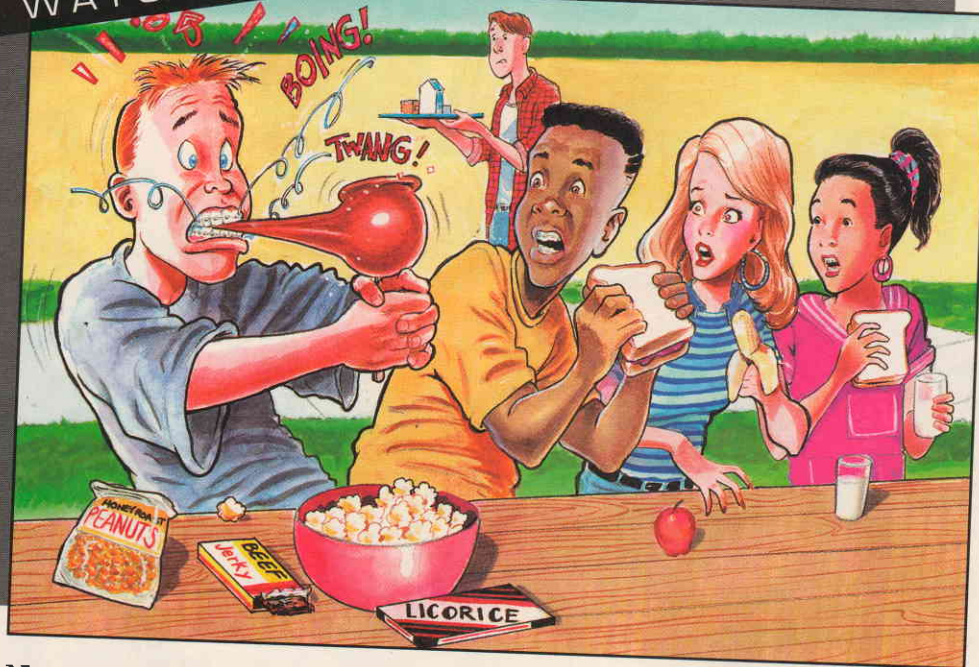


Then brush the inside and outside surfaces of your top and bottom gums.



Brush slowly between your brackets and gums. Rinse your mouth and look at your teeth and bands. If they're not shining, brush 'em again!

WATCH OUT



No, you don't have to stop eating all your favorite stuff. Just beware of hard, chewy, icy, or sticky foods. They can do a lot of damage to your braces, and that means extra trips to your orthodontist's office. Try to eat softer food, and cut big or crunchy food into bite-size pieces.

STRAIGHT TALK

from Tatyana Ali of
NBC's "The Fresh
Prince of Bel-Air"

"I used to take my retainer out and give it to my mom before I went on stage. My advice? Just keep it in your mouth as long as you can. Your teeth will end up looking a lot better."




NBC photo by Chris Haston



Consultant:
Keith A. Vozzak, DMD, MSD,
Orthodontics

With contributions by:
A panel of teen orthodontic patients

 This publication is recyclable