

## ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT FOR ADULT PATIENTS

**Orthodontic treatment is not just for children. More and more adults are now seeking treatment by Specialist Orthodontists.**

In fact, surveys conducted by the American Association of Orthodontists indicate that adults account for approximately one in every four new patients in contemporary orthodontic practices.

The basic biological and mechanical process of tooth movement is the same at any age. Therefore orthodontic treatment can be successfully completed in healthy adult patients, albeit over a slightly longer time frame than in children.

Adults attend this practice for management of a variety of orthodontic problems. Most have had orthodontic concerns since childhood and are only now seeking treatment for cosmetic or functional reasons.



Crowded Teeth



Protruding Teeth



Traumatic Overbite



Spacing and Gaps

Unsightly crowded or crooked teeth, protruding or “bucky” teeth, traumatic deep over-bites and large gaps between the teeth are a few of the most common presenting orthodontic problems in children and adults. Some adults present for treatment because they have new problems that have developed since childhood that now require specialist orthodontic care. Such problems include excessive tooth wear, gum damage or drifting of teeth due to gum disease or previous extractions.

As a general rule, adults will consider orthodontic treatment because:

- They are unhappy with the appearance of their teeth and are seeking treatment for cosmetic purposes.
- They are experiencing oral health problems as a result of uneven tooth positioning or irregular jaw relationships.
- Their dentist has referred them for management of poorly aligned teeth or a bad bite, which is preventing the dentist from carrying out other procedures.

As an adult considering orthodontic treatment, it is understandable that you may feel some apprehension. Unfortunately many untruths and misunderstandings still exist amongst the general public about adult orthodontic treatment, particularly in adults. We hope that this brochure will help to inform you correctly, separate fact from fiction, and perhaps encourage you to take the first step towards improving your smile with orthodontic treatment.

### Do I have to wear Metal Braces?

No. Even though fixed braces treatment is still the “gold standard” treatment for most complex orthodontic problems, it is important to understand that today’s orthodontic appliances are very different to those even used a decade ago. Recent advances in scientific knowledge and orthodontic technology have greatly enhanced the aesthetics, precision and comfort of orthodontic appliances. Old style chunky metal braces and bands are no longer a necessity. Ceramic “Tooth Coloured” Braces and Invisalign removable tooth aligners are the two main cosmetic orthodontic appliance options for adults. Both of these appliances are very discrete and well accepted by adults. A combination of cosmetic appliances and very small metal braces can be offered in more complex orthodontic cases when cosmetic options may not be completely suitable for the correction of the presenting problems. Once we have thoroughly assessed your teeth, bite, jaw structures and facial profile, suitable treatment options for your unique set of orthodontic problems can be advised.



Ceramic tooth coloured braces



Invisalign Removable Tooth Aligners

### Will Orthodontic Treatment affect my lifestyle?

Contrary to popular belief, wearing braces or tooth aligners does not interfere significantly with an adult lifestyle professionally or socially. Adult orthodontic patients can still make business presentations, dine out, play musical instruments, play sports etc. Where appearance is of paramount importance, we are able to offer various cosmetic options (see above).

### Can my appearance be improved?

Yes! This is usually the primary motivation for seeking orthodontic treatment in the first place. Dramatic changes in a person’s smile and facial profile can be achieved. These improvements will lead to an enhanced sense of self-image, increased self-confidence and in turn a greater sense of well being. Your new smile will make you look and feel younger.

## Can my bite be improved?

Yes! Crooked teeth and/or poor bite relationships can be detrimental to your overall oral health. Problems such as tooth decay, gum disease, abnormal tooth wear and jaw joint (TMJ) problems can develop if orthodontic problems go untreated. Properly aligned and supported teeth are easier to clean and are more likely to last throughout your lifetime. Additionally, some dental restorative procedures such as crowns, bridges, implants or veneers are often impossible for a dentist to perform without prior repositioning of the teeth by an orthodontist.

## How long does treatment take?

Treatment times vary greatly from 6 months for correction of simple alignment problems to 30 months or longer for more complex orthodontic treatment. Most comprehensive treatment plans involving braces or Invisalign for all upper and lower teeth are usually 12-24 months in length. Appointments are usually scheduled every 4-8 weeks during the active treatment phase. After active treatment is completed retainers are used for several years to hold the teeth and prevent relapse of the original problem.

## Will treatment be comfortable?

Wearing braces is simple and generally quite easy with the modern appliances available. Wearing Invisalign is even more comfortable than braces as there are no wires or brackets to irritate the cheeks and lips. Remember however, that braces and Invisalign aligners do need to be regularly adjusted for the teeth to move and this will make the teeth feel tender for a few days. Analgesic medications such as Nurofen or paracetamol are rarely, if ever, required.



## What is Surgical Orthodontics?

Orthodontics in combination with jaw surgery may be necessary for the correction of more severe imbalances of jaw relationships in adult patients. In these cases, tooth movement with braces alone cannot accomplish the desired changes. Please visit our website ([www.carouselorthodontics.com.au](http://www.carouselorthodontics.com.au)) and download the fact sheet on Orthodontics and Jaw Surgery if you require more information.

## Do I need a Referral?

No, but it is strongly recommended and preferred.

## Do I need to see a General Dentist?

Yes. All adults should see their family dentist on a six-monthly basis to help maintain good oral health. If you are contemplating orthodontic treatment, this is especially important. Orthodontic treatment is simply not an option for adults with substandard oral hygiene, tooth decay, gum disease, gingivitis or badly broken down teeth. These issues need to be addressed by your dentist prior to the commencement of orthodontic treatment. Once orthodontic treatment has started it is important that you continue to see a general dentist on a regular basis for routine tooth scaling/cleaning and check-ups.

## How much does it cost?

Our fees vary greatly depending nature and severity of the orthodontic problem, the treatment method, the type of appliances used and the anticipated treatment duration. Do not assume that your treatment will cost the same as someone else's. We are only able to provide a detailed quotation(s) once a thorough examination has been completed and pre-treatment diagnostic records have been obtained. For most treatment we are able to provide extended payment terms.

## Is Orthodontic treatment covered by Private Health Insurance?

Most health insurance providers will cover some, but not all, of the cost of orthodontic treatment if you have an appropriate level of dental (ancillary) insurance. However, qualifying periods of up to 5 -10 years apply in many cases. You should carefully check the details of premiums, conditions and level of rebate with your insurer before deciding on taking out or upgrading existing private health insurance policies.



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