
Orthodontic treatment is not just for children. More and more adults are now seeking treatment by orthodontic specialists.

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. One of the most important factors for successful orthodontic treatment is good patient co-operation. It is for this reason that adults make excellent orthodontic patients.

Many adults attend this practice for management of a variety of orthodontic problems. Some have had orthodontic problems as children and are only now seeking treatment.



Crowded Teeth



Protruding Teeth



Traumatic Overbite



Spacing and Gaps

Crowded or crooked teeth, protruding or “bucky” teeth, traumatic deep over-bites and large gaps are a few of the most common presenting problems. Others have problems that have developed since childhood that now require specialist orthodontic care. Such problems include excessive tooth wear or drifting of teeth due to gum disease or previous extractions. Most adults consider orthodontics for two reasons.

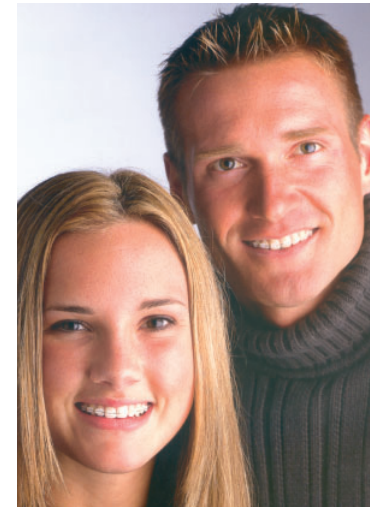
1. They are unhappy with the appearance of their teeth and are seeking treatment for cosmetic purposes.
2. Their dentist has referred them for management of poorly aligned teeth, a problem that may affect their oral health.

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. 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. Although 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 metal braces or bands are no longer a necessity. Various different “cosmetic” appliance options are now available.

These include Ceramic “Tooth Coloured” braces, Lingual “Inside” braces or Removable Aligners. Some of these options may not be suitable for the correction of certain orthodontic 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



Lingual “inside” braces



Removable aligners

WILL ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT AFFECT MY LIFESTYLE?

Contrary to popular belief, wearing braces or other orthodontic appliances does not interfere with an adult lifestyle. 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.

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 2 1/2 years or longer for more complex orthodontic treatment. Most comprehensive treatment plans involving all upper and lower teeth are usually 20-28 months in length. Appointments are usually scheduled every 4-8 weeks during the active treatment phase. After braces are taken off, retainer plates or wires are used for several years to hold the teeth in their new positions.

WILL TREATMENT BE COMFORTABLE?

Wearing braces is simple and generally quite easy with the modern devices available. However, braces do need to be regularly adjusted, and this will make the teeth feel tender for a few days. Analgesic medications such as aspirin or paracetamol are rarely, if ever, required. Lingual or "inside" braces take significantly longer to become accustomed to than regular braces due to their close proximity to the tongue.

WHAT IS SURGICAL ORTHODONTICS?

Orthodontics in combination with jaw reconstructive 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.

DO I NEED A REFERRAL?

No.

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?

Healthcare experts often cite orthodontics as being, dollar for dollar, one of the best healthcare values. Orthodontic treatment brings long-term health benefits and may contribute to the avoidance of costly, serious dental problems later in life. 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 (plaster models, X-rays and photographs) have been obtained. For most treatment we are able to provide 12-month payment terms.

SHOULD I TAKE OUT 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 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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Orthodontic Treatment for Adult Patients



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