

Info

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BRACES

Does my child need Orthodontic Treatment (braces)?

These warning signs indicate that your child needs to have Orthodontic Treatment:

- Crooked or overlapping teeth
- Protruding teeth
- Delayed eruption of permanent teeth
- Mouthbreathing
- Thumbsucking habit
- Difficulty in closing the lips
- Open bite, cross bite, deep bite
- Disharmony in jaw growth



When is the best time to start Orthodontics?

Your child is an individual with a special pattern of growth and dental development. There is usually a "best time" for a child to begin treatment for straightening teeth. Early diagnosis by the Orthodontist will determine the best time to begin.

When do I start to bring my child to an Orthodontist?



An early examination, at age 7, enables the orthodontist to determine the timing and type of treatment your child needs. In some children, the best results are achieved in the growing years. In other children, the initial examination by the orthodontist may not be followed immediately by treatment. The orthodontist may want to monitor your child with periodic examinations to check on the eruption of permanent teeth, before recommending braces.

Is it necessary for my child to have straight teeth?

It is important for a child to have a good set of healthy teeth to eat with. Malocclusion (crooked teeth and incorrect bites) can affect your child's general health, speech and gums. A good and healthy-looking smile can enhance your child's self-confidence and self-esteem.

What kind of braces will my child wear?

The orthodontist will select the most appropriate type of braces to treat your child's particular problem. Braces may be fixed to the teeth or may be removable. Sometimes, your child will require both types of braces. Some permanent teeth may need to be removed in order to make space for lining up the teeth.



How long will my child need to wear braces?

In general, active treatment time range from one and a half to three years. The actual time will depend on the severity of the problem and growth of your child's face and mouth. Good oral hygiene, regular appointments and co-operation will help treatment to progress smoothly.

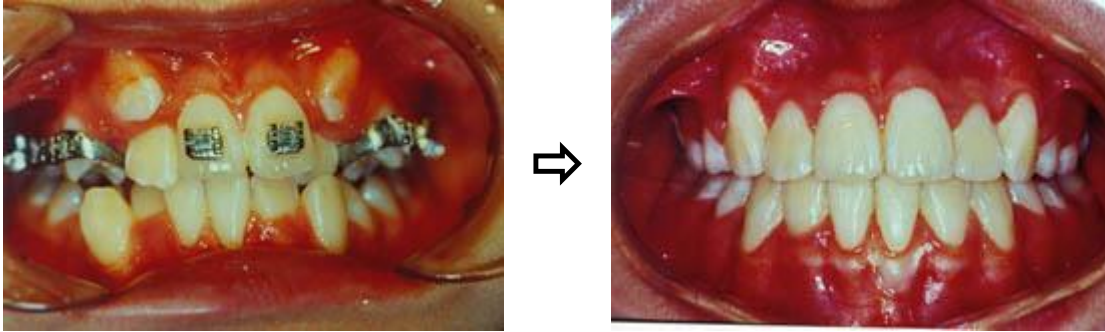
How important is co-operation?

Successful orthodontic treatment requires co-operative effort between your child and the orthodontist. The orthodontist provides the expertise and braces to straighten teeth but your child must follow instructions carefully, so that the teeth can move properly an on time. Good result from treatment is achieved through a partnership of effort between those involved.

Is it too late for me to start orthodontic treatment?

Orthodontic treatment can be successful at any age. Adults can also undergo treatment to correct malocclusion. However, certain types of problems cannot be treated with braces alone. Some may require a combination therapy of jaw surgery and braces.





TYPES OF BRACES

Custom-made appliances, or braces, are prescribed and designed according to the problem being treated. They may be removable or fixed (cemented and/or bonded). They may be made of metal, ceramic or plastic. All corrective appliances have one aim - i.e. to use gentle pressure to move teeth into their proper and desired positions. Because of this pressure, The body builds new tissue to support the improved position of the teeth.

Removal Appliances



Unlike conventional braces, which create pressure by being attached directly to the teeth, removable appliances are used in different ways. Some are intended to influence growth of the jaws in order to effect changes in facial structure eg. Functional appliances like "activator", "bionator", "herbst". Some are used to retain teeth in their corrected positions (retainer). Also, they are used in conjunction with fixed appliances or habit breaking eg. "bite planes" and "thumb guards".

Still, removable appliances are not right for all orthodontic problems. It takes skill and experience to recognise conditions that will respond favorably to removable appliances. Timing of such therapy is also very important. An orthodontic specialist is trained to make such treatment decisions.

Fixed Appliances

1. Metal brace

These are most commonly used; designed for patient comfort and clinical efficiency. They are inexpensive and well accepted by patients.



2. Tooth coloured / Aesthetic braces (ceramic, plastic)

These aesthetically appealing braces are available in translucent material, to blend with teeth, or in a clear, transparent material that allows the natural colour of the teeth to show through. But they are not for everyone. The ceramic material is very hard-harder than teeth - and cannot be used in all circumstances. They are usually more costly. The plastic braces are not as durable as metal or ceramic and require additional care. However, the orthodontist will recommend the proper type of braces for you.



INTERCEPTIVE TREATMENT

Interceptive Guidance

Space management is important in orthodontic treatment. There are malocclusions that require the preservation of space during the developmental years while others require the extraction of teeth to provide space. A thorough diagnosis should be carried out prior to the placement of a space maintainer, or the initiation of serial extraction, to determine if the patient's malocclusion is to be treated with or without the extraction of permanent teeth.

Functional Appliances

Patients with protruding upper incisors may benefit from treatment with functional appliances. These are appliances intended to influence growth of the jaws in order to effect changes in facial structure (Fig 1). These appliances reposition the jaws and control the tongue, lips and cheeks to keep them from interfering with tooth position.



Habit Appliances

Habits such as thumb sucking, tongue thrushing, lip posture and mouth breathing, and functional problems, such as mandibular displacement, which is often associated with anterior or posterior crossbites, are usually treated as early as possible. Habit appliances are designed in many different ways and are used until the harmful habit has stopped.

Orthodontic Headgears

Orthodontic headgear is a very important part of the treatment for patients. Headgear creates special forces that guide the growth of the face and jaws. It also is used to move teeth into better positions or to prevent teeth from moving when they are not supposed to. Regular use of your headgear achieves the best results.



SOME FACTS ABOUT ADULT ORTHODONTICS

Most adults consider seeing an orthodontist for two reasons:

- (1) Their dentist has told them that their teeth are crowded, a problem which will eventually affect their oral health (Fig 1) and/or
- (2) They are unhappy with the appearance of their teeth because there are large spaces between their teeth or their teeth (Fig 2) are crooked or their front teeth are protruding.



The qualified orthodontist corrects such problems.

Am I too old for Orthodontics?

There is no age limit for orthodontics. Teeth and tissue are essentially the same in both adults and children. Orthodontists can successfully realign teeth regardless of your age.

How long will it take?

Most orthodontists agree that the adult treatment will usually take from 10 to 20 percent longer due to the difference in the physiologic responses of the tissues in the mouth of an adult as compared with a ten or twelve year old child. Simply put, an adult's bone structure is denser and firmly set, so a slightly longer response time to tooth movement can be expected.

Will I look funny?

Not necessarily so. Minor corrections can be accomplished with braces placed on the back of the teeth ("invisible" braces). More complex treatment may require braces placed on the front of the teeth to successfully move them to the desired positions. They vary from the conventional steel bands cemented around the



teeth to less obvious brackets bonded on the outer surfaces of the teeth. The brackets bonded can be made of stainless steel, plastic or ceramic material (Fig 3). Ceramic material is very hard - harder than teeth - and cannot be used in all circumstances. In some instances, additional cost may be involved. The plastic braces are not as durable as metal or ceramic and require additional care. Your orthodontists will recommend the proper type of braces for you.

Will it hurt?

Discomfort has to result when we loosen a tooth for movement. This usually last about 43 to 72 hours and then the teeth are comfortable again. Each succeeding adjustment will mean some minor discomfort, although our adult patients report a reduction in pain as the treatment progress.