

Orthodontic treatment

What is orthodontic treatment?

Orthodontic treatment involves wearing braces (removable and fixed). It may involve the extraction of teeth and, very occasionally, jaw surgery.

What might I gain from orthodontic treatment?

The benefits of orthodontic treatment can include the following:

- Correction of dental crowding and straightening of your teeth.
- Correction of your bite so that the front and back teeth meet together evenly on closing.
- Reducing the likelihood of damage to prominent teeth.
- Improving your appearance, including your smile.

What types of braces are there?

Removable braces are those which can be removed for cleaning.

Fixed braces are ones glued on to the teeth and they cannot be removed for cleaning.

When will the brace be fitted?

This depends on the correct number of adult teeth being present in the mouth and the stage of growth of your face and jaws. You need to be good at tooth brushing, keeping your teeth clean and be keen to have treatment.

How long will the treatment take?

Treatment with braces may take between 6-30 months to complete, depending on your orthodontic problem. Very difficult problems may take longer.

If teeth need to be extracted, who will do this?

Your own dentist will usually do this.

Is it painful?

Having the brace fitted is not painful. However, it is common to have slightly sore teeth for 3- 5 days after first fitting the brace and after each adjustment appointment.

How often will I need an appointment?

Once your brace has been fitted, you will need regular appointments for it to be adjusted.

Will the brace affect what I can eat?

In order to prevent damage to both your teeth and brace, you will need to:

- Avoid sugary snack/drinks between meals and at bedtime
- Avoid sticky, chewy or hard sweets, mints and sugared chewing gum
- Avoid fizzy drinks (including diet drinks) and large amounts of fruit juice.
- Avoid hard or chewy foods- such as apples, carrots and crusty bread because these can damage your brace. Avoid them or cut them up first.

Will orthodontic treatment damage my teeth?

It is important that you brush your teeth well for at least 3 minutes, twice a day. Use a fluoride toothpaste. To further protect the teeth, use an alcohol-free fluoride mouth rinse daily at a different time to when you brush your teeth. Avoid eating or rinsing for 20 minutes after using it.

Sugary snacks/drinks and poor cleaning of your teeth will lead to permanent damage to your teeth. Having orthodontic treatment to improve the appearance of your teeth will be pointless if such damage like this takes place. Further information can be given to you by your orthodontist.

Will I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. It will be important for you to continue to have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment so that your teeth can be checked for decay

Will I still be able to play contact sports?

Yes, but it is recommended that you wear a mouth guard. This will also be the case if you take part in activities requiring a protective helmet e.g. roller blading, skateboarding and horse riding.

What if I play a musical instrument?

A fixed brace may make it more difficult for you to play your wind or brass instrument. You will need to discuss this with your music teacher and orthodontist.

What if my brace breaks during treatment?

Contact your orthodontist for an appointment as soon as is reasonably possible. Repeated breakages will slow down treatment and increase the overall treatment time. You may have to pay for replacement braces and, if further breakages occur, then treatment might have to stop.

What happens at the end of treatment?

Your teeth might move back towards their original positions. In order to prevent this, you will be fitted with retainers. Your orthodontist will advise you on how long and how often to wear them

How successful is orthodontic treatment?

This very much depends on your commitment to the treatment. Patients who cooperate well with treatment and wear their retainers as advised, get good results, whilst those who do not, are not likely to get the results they wanted.