

## Does it hurt?

Orthodontic treatment generally does not cause pain. For most of the time that you have appliances in place, you hardly know they are there, not unlike wearing glasses, a watch or jewellery.

When first fitted, appliances will initially cause some irritation and soreness in your mouth, which soon disappears as you become used to them. You may need to take a mild analgesic such as Panadol for a few days. Depending on your treatment, you may also experience some tenderness and mild temporary discomfort after the orthodontist has adjusted the orthodontic appliance that moves your teeth. This rarely lasts more than a day or so and a mild analgesic will relieve it. When explaining your treatment, the orthodontist will let you know of any possible discomfort you might experience, if any.

Most orthodontic appliances collect more plaque and you will need to clean your teeth more often and more carefully than you probably do before treatment. It is important that you see your dentist regularly during orthodontic treatment for your general dental care.

## Should I consider treatment?

A visit to the orthodontist will give you a comprehensive answer to this question. After listening to your concerns, the orthodontist will examine you, explain your situation and the treatment options you have, as well as answer your questions. To make a thorough diagnosis and formulate options for you, the orthodontist may have to gather some records. These may include photographs, plaster models of your teeth and x-rays.

## What are the benefits?

The most apparent benefits of orthodontic treatment are a beautiful smile and the confidence boost this can bring, but there are other benefits.

Straight teeth and a good bite reduce wear on your teeth, which helps them to stay in better condition and last longer. Cleaning your teeth and gums to prevent decay and gum disease is easier to do well with straight teeth than with crooked ones. Being able to chew your food better can benefit your digestion and nutrition for greater wellbeing.

The benefit to patients who receive orthodontic treatment as part of restorative dentistry is to help the dentist to give them the best possible result for both function and appearance.

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# Orthodontic treatment for adults

## Why is it popular?

More adult patients than ever are enjoying the appearance, dental and other health benefits that orthodontic treatment can give them.

Our society is much more conscious of appearance and there is a greater desire to look and feel the best one can. Orthodontic treatment has become considerably more comfortable and affordable, making it more attractive to undertake. A variety of aesthetic treatment options are available that do not involve traditional metal braces, which most adults would rather not wear. You can receive orthodontic treatment at any age and even adults in their sixties and seventies now seek it.

Some adults wish to correct a mal-alignment of their teeth that has been there since childhood, others to correct crowding that has occurred in recent years as teeth do continue to move throughout life. Unfortunately, the movement of teeth is part of the ageing process and often involves the lower front teeth.

Other patients may have very localised treatment to assist their dentist with restorative work, such as raising, lowering or uprighting one or several teeth, closing a gap between teeth, or creating space for an implant. Some treatments can be much more extensive, for example the correction of underlying jaw growth or alignment problems to produce a great smile and healthy bite.

## What are aesthetic appliances?

Orthodontists can now treat many patients with a series of clear plastic plates that fit over the teeth to move them. Being clear makes them almost invisible. After one plate has moved the teeth a little, the next one replaces it to move the teeth a little further and so on, until the teeth are in the desired position. Patients only take out the plates for eating and for cleaning their teeth. The best-known sequential plate system is Invisalign®.



*Invisalign®*

Invisalign® is suitable for treating simple cases well. However, it is not suitable for all patients and often cannot achieve the same accuracy as treatment with braces. Therefore, treating moderately difficult cases with Invisalign® may require the patient to either accept a compromise in the achievable result, or receive treatment in combination with partial braces or micro appliances.

Patients who require orthodontic treatment with braces can choose to have braces with ceramic brackets, which are less visible than metal ones, or lingual braces, which are invisible because they are on the back of the teeth. Treatment with lingual braces can be as effective as treatment with braces on the front of the teeth, but it is generally more expensive and a little more uncomfortable.



*Clear braces*



*Lingual braces*