

# Orthodontic treatment benefits and risks. Things to consider before you decide to have treatment

## Orthodontic treatment has the potential to:

- Improve the appearance of teeth and smile
- Improve self-confidence and reduce bullying related to the teeth
- Correct dental crowding or spacing which may make it easier to keep your teeth clean
- Correct the bite so that you can chew better
- Reduce the likelihood of damage to prominent teeth
- Improve facial aesthetics
- Align impacted, unerupted or displaced teeth
- Prepare for advanced dental treatment, such as crowns, bridges or dental implants
- Prepare the teeth for jaw surgery in adults who have mismatch in jaw position

## RISKS AND CONSIDERATIONS



Good co-operation is required to achieve the best possible treatment result

- Excellent tooth brushing is essential. Food and plaque collect on the braces and, if this is not removed by brushing, white marks (decalcification) or even decay on the

front of the teeth may result. Poor oral hygiene can cause swelling and/or bleeding of the gums (gingivitis).

- Some patients experience discomfort or clicking of jaw joints (temporomandibular joint dysfunction). Orthodontic treatment does not cause or cure this problem and it is usually gets better itself but can require treatment.
- Adults especially, after the teeth are aligned, may notice “dark triangles” forming between the teeth, below the contact points and above the gum. This is partially related to normal recession of the gums that occurs with age.
- Teeth that have deep fillings or have suffered even minor trauma can die over a long period of time, with or without orthodontic treatment. A tooth may cause symptoms during orthodontic treatment and require root canal treatment.
- In order to move teeth a gentle force has to be applied and this may cause some discomfort or occasional pain when an appliance is fitted, or adjusted. The teeth may become slightly loose but will usually firm up once the appliances are removed.
- Sometimes individual teeth may change colour during treatment and may need root canal treatment.
- When upper front teeth are pulled back to reduce upper front tooth prominence, the upper lip will also be brought back slightly.
- Teeth will move throughout life. To help prevent unwanted movements after treatment, retainers will be provided to reduce the amount of change that happens.
- Co-operation with retainers is essential. If you wish to have straight teeth forever, you must wear retainers at least part-time forever (lifelong). You are provided with 1 set of NHS retainers. Replacement retainers may have to be paid for or obtained privately after discharge from our service.
- Avoid hard, chewy and sticky foods as these can damage your brace. If an appliance breaks or becomes loose, it can cause pain and delay treatment. Please contact the Orthodontic Department for an emergency appointment. Appliances must be adjusted regularly and regular attendance will ensure that treatment is completed in the minimum time.
- Although you are attending the Orthodontic Department, you still must attend your dentist for your routine dental care.
- The total treatment time may be longer or shorter than estimated. Favourable or unfavourable growth, lack of co-operation, broken appliances and missed appointments are all important factors which could lengthen treatment time and affect the treatment result.

- Occasionally, a person who has grown normally may not continue to do so. In such cases, the treatment objectives may have to be changed, as jaw growth is beyond the orthodontist's control
- All appointments are during school hours. Treatment will be carried out by a person with appropriate experience including: an Orthodontic Therapist, an Orthodontic Therapist in training, a Dentist undergoing postgraduate specialist training in Orthodontics, a Specialist or a Consultant in Orthodontics.

Rarely when components of the braces become loose or broken they can be ingested or inhaled. This is extremely uncommon but can necessitate medical treatment. If any bracework becomes loose, it is important to let us know and to seek a dental professional to repair the brace or make it safe as soon as possible.

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