

It's Never Too late...



ORTHODONTICS FOR ADULTS

# WELCOME

## ORTHODONTICS FOR ADULTS

Welcome to our office. We're pleased to have you visit us. Because we want to let you know what to expect during your treatment, we've prepared this booklet to answer questions you may have about orthodontics for adults.

As you probably know, orthodontists are dentists with additional education who specialize in correcting problems associated with misaligned teeth, problems that affect your health as well as your teeth.

Today, more than 30% of orthodontic patients are over 18 years old. Crooked teeth, improper bite, overcrowding and protrusions are being corrected in many people, regardless of age.

New dental technology has made the process easier and more effective than ever. Better bonding techniques, lighter, less conspicuous wires, miniaturized or clear appliances and even "invisible" braces have all encouraged adults to seek orthodontic treatment.

Simply put, it is one of the best investments you can make in your appearance and your health.



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## DRAMATIC RESULTS

The benefits of orthodontic treatment can be dramatically obvious. What may be less obvious are the benefits to health, well being and self esteem.

### BEFORE

### AFTER

#### ABNORMAL JAW DEVELOPMENT



The orthodontist-maxillofacial surgeon team approach produces phenomenal results

#### DEFICIENT LOWER JAW



Surgically advancing the lower jaw brings the profile into a nice balance

#### EXCESSIVE GROWTH IN THE LOWER JAW AND RESTRICTED GROWTH IN THE UPPER JAW



A combination of orthodontic treatment and orthognathic surgery corrects the problems beautifully

## MODERN DENTISTRY

In recent years, dentistry has made tremendous advances in the prevention and treatment of dental problems. Working as a team, your family dentist, the orthodontist and possibly the maxillofacial surgeon, periodontist and/or endodontist can combine their efforts to deliver to you state-of-the-art dentistry.



## HOW ADULT ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT IS DIFFERENT

The major difference between adolescent and adult orthodontic treatment is that adult bones are no longer growing and it may take a little longer for your teeth to move into their correct position.

- ▶ Teeth must be cleaned more often – sometimes every 6 weeks to 3 months, depending on the specific problem.
- ▶ Teeth sometimes move more slowly.
- ▶ After straightening front teeth that were crowded, a small triangular space may appear at the gum line between these teeth.
- ▶ In growing patients, changes in jaw relationships can be achieved with regular treatment. In adults, similar changes may require surgical procedures.
- ▶ Rotated teeth, after correction, have a greater chance to relapse. A periodontal procedure called a “fiberotomy” is sometimes recommended on these rotations before the braces are removed to prevent this relapse.
- ▶ If your retainer is not worn as directed, small spaces may develop after braces are removed where teeth were extracted prior to treatment.

## YOUR COMMITMENT IS ESSENTIAL

You can expect regular office visits during the course of your treatment, usually once every 4 to 8 weeks. It is important that you keep each appointment. You will also need to brush your teeth after every meal and floss as often as possible. Using a Water Pik® may also be helpful.

Eating the right foods, getting a good night’s sleep and limiting between-meal snacks will also make your treatment more successful.

Without your commitment to these basic requirements, results will be slower in coming and your treatment may fall short of full achievable goals. So let’s work together as partners in this process. Combining your committed efforts with our professional treatment will produce lasting results – results you can smile about!

## FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Financial arrangements are determined before treatment is initiated. These arrangements are available to meet the needs of the patient.

## INSURANCE VERIFICATION

Coverage for your orthodontic treatment should be verified with your employer, union or insurance carrier. We will be happy to help supply the specific information about your personal coverage.

If your insurance company requires a pre-treatment plan for pre-authorization of your claim, we will submit all required forms for you.

If you don’t get the insurance benefits you believe you are entitled to, contact your employer or insurance agent. Be aware, however, that most insurance plans don’t cover all the costs of orthodontic treatment.



## GETTING YOUR TREATMENT STARTED



Your orthodontic requirements will be determined during an initial examination. At that time we'll discuss your orthodontic problems and the treatment needed to correct them. We'll also talk about the fee range, length of treatment and other factors affecting your treatment.



We will recommend a diagnostic exam. It will include x-rays, cast impressions of your teeth and facial/oral photographs.



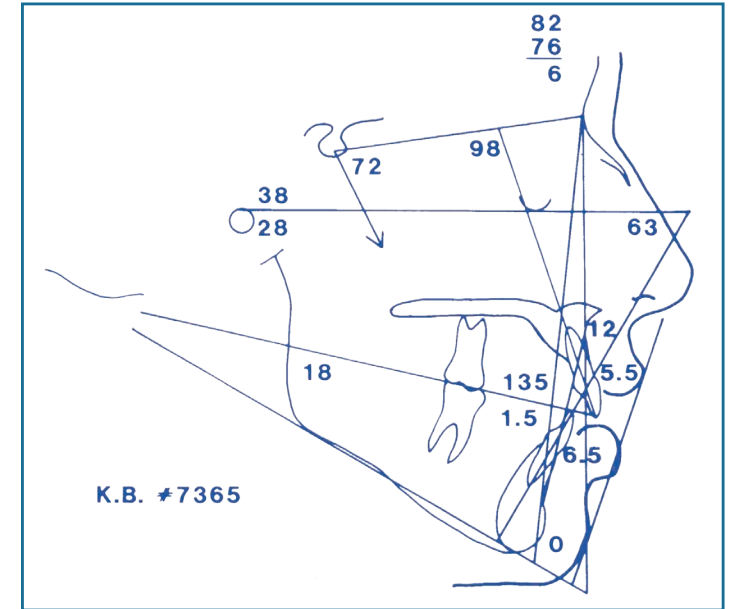
After the results have been reviewed and the best course of action is determined, your treatment will be explained in more detail – how long you will need to wear braces, the importance of your cooperation, the total cost, your payment schedule and other matters.

If you have cavities or other dental problems requiring treatment, they must be corrected by your dentist before we proceed. Dental checkups at least every three to six months are required during your orthodontic treatment.

## MAKING ROOM IN YOUR MOUTH

In some cases, additional dental treatment is necessary before we can begin orthodontic treatment. This may involve tooth extraction to make room for the straightening process. In a few cases, if, upon x-ray analysis, a significant discrepancy of your upper and lower jaw is discovered, maxillofacial surgery may be required as part of the correction of your skeletal and dental problems. Of course, we'll discuss such possibilities with you before treatment begins.

As the mouth matures, certain conditions may develop that require special attention. The periodontal structures (gums and bone around the teeth) sometimes need attention before, during and after treatment. The TMJ (joint that hinges the jaws together) can develop clicking and pain –and may even require special testing and therapy before orthodontics is initiated.



## ADULT TREATMENT OPTIONS

Today, more than 30% of orthodontic patients are over 18 years old. Crooked teeth, improper bite, overcrowding and “buck teeth” are now being corrected in many people regardless of age. The major difference between child and adult orthodontic treatment is that adult bones are no longer growing. This means it may take a little longer for adult teeth to move into their correct position. In general, adult treatment takes between eighteen and thirty months.

Adults have more choices than ever in creating a beautiful smile. From traditional braces to “invisible” braces, the number of effective and cosmetically pleasing treatment options is growing all the time. Current options include both traditional braces and Invisalign® shown on the following page.

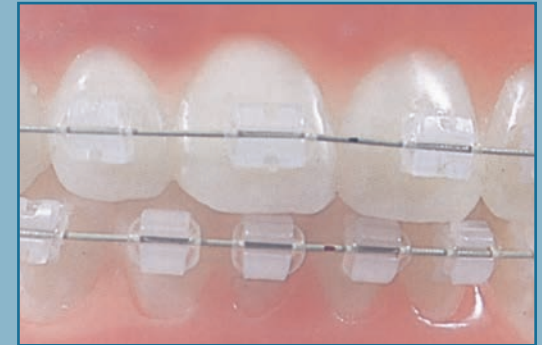


### Traditional Braces

Recent improvements in traditional braces have resulted in smaller, stronger, more efficient and less conspicuous brackets. Metal brackets are the most familiar, however, clear and tooth-color ceramic and plastic brackets are now available. Their clear or natural color gives these brackets a less noticeable look.



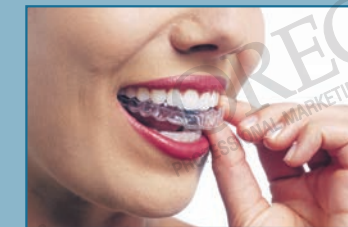
Metal Braces



“Clear” Braces

### Invisalign®

Invisalign is a popular treatment option that involves wearing a series of clear, removable aligners that gradually move your teeth without wires or brackets.



Above photos courtesy of Align Technology, Inc.

## LENGTH OF TREATMENT

The amount of time patients are in braces varies from person to person, depending on the problem. Eighteen to thirty months is the normal average.

### Spacers Appointment

On your first appointment, following your initial consultation, you may be given spacers. Some of your teeth may need to be separated slightly to make room for bands. Spaces are created by slipping small donut-shaped rings or springs ("spacers") between your teeth.

Your teeth and gums will be sensitive and sore for a short time after the spacers are put in place. This discomfort usually disappears within a few days, as your teeth adjust. In the meantime, a warm saltwater rinse will ease the discomfort. In addition, you may take over-the-counter pain medication as prescribed by your orthodontist.

If you lose any of the spacers, don't wait for your next appointment to have them replaced. Call us, so that we can schedule an appointment to replace them right away.

### Fitting Your Braces

After the spacers have done their job, you will have an appointment for the placement of your braces. Bands, brackets and wires will be carefully fitted to you at this time. This appointment will last approximately 1-2 hours.

During the first few weeks, as your mouth gets used to the braces, you'll experience soreness similar to that caused by the spacers. Again, rinsing your mouth with a warm saltwater solution and taking over-the-counter medication may help.

Following each regular appointment for adjusting your braces, you'll notice a temporary pressure increase. This pressure should disappear in a few days. If it doesn't, contact our office.



## FOODS: COMMON SENSE IS YOUR BEST POLICY

Proper eating habits are one key to a successful orthodontic program. If you haven't done so already, establish a pattern of regular, nutritious meals. Snacks should be avoided when you're unable to brush soon after eating them.

Avoid soft, sticky foods and candies. They can loosen or even dislodge your braces. Some examples are gum (especially bubble gum) and candies such as caramels and taffy.

Be careful with whole fruits and vegetables too. Cut apples and carrots into very thin slices and chew them carefully. Slice corn off the cob.

It's best to avoid chips and dip. If that's too much of a sacrifice, indulge in moderation. Never suck on lemons, limes or ice. Also, do not chew on pens or pencils.

### HARD FOODS TO AVOID INCLUDE:

- ▶ Corn on the Cob
- ▶ Hard Candy
- ▶ Corn Chips
- ▶ Popcorn
- ▶ Jerky
- ▶ Ice
- ▶ Nuts
- ▶ Pizza Crust
- ▶ Jolly Ranchers

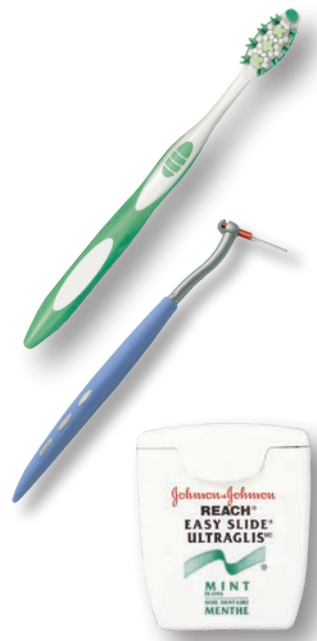


### SOFT FOODS TO AVOID INCLUDE:

- ▶ Bubble Gum
- ▶ Gum (as directed by your orthodontist)
- ▶ Starbursts
- ▶ Sugar Daddies
- ▶ Tootsie Rolls
- ▶ Gummy Bears
- ▶ Caramels
- ▶ Taffy
- ▶ Other chewy candies



## PROPER BRACES CARE AND BRUSHING TECHNIQUES



Brushing and flossing your teeth can be challenging when wearing braces but it is extremely important that you do both consistently.

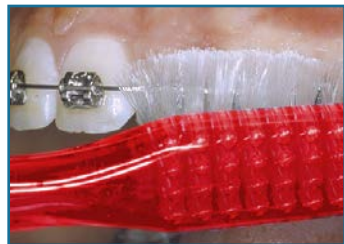


- ▶ **Toothbrush bristles should be soft. Brush after every meal. If you cannot brush right away, rinse well with water.**
- ▶ **Special brushes can be used for hard-to-clean places.**
- ▶ **Electronic toothbrushes combine high speed bristle motion and provide thorough cleaning around braces and in hard-to-reach areas.**
- ▶ **Dental Floss should be unwaxed.**

### BRUSHING



Use a dry brush with a small amount of toothpaste. Place bristles where gums and teeth meet.



Use circular, vibrating motions around the gum lines, 10 seconds on each tooth.



Brush slowly, each arch separately, every tooth.



Brush the lower teeth up and the upper teeth down. Brush your tongue and the roof of your mouth too.

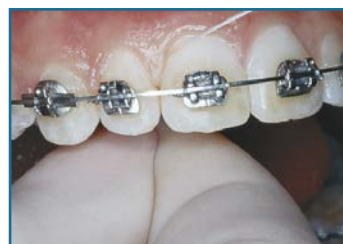
### FLOSSING



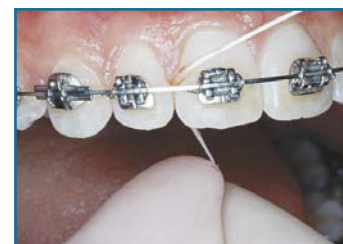
Carefully pull unwaxed floss between wire and braces. A floss threader may be helpful.



Floss carefully around the braces.



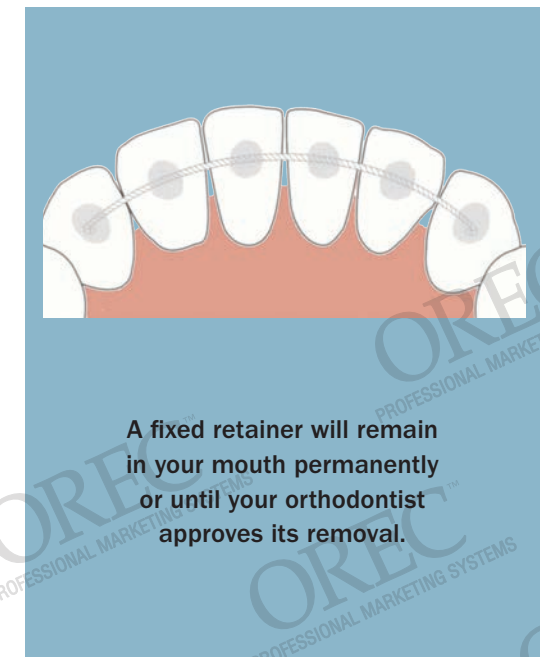
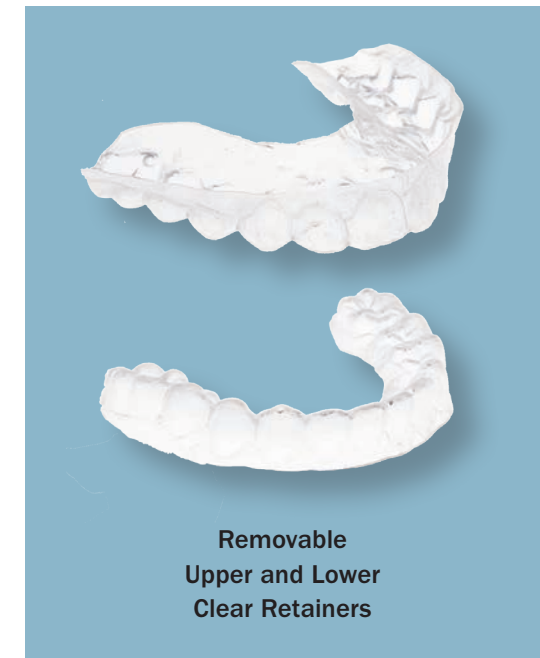
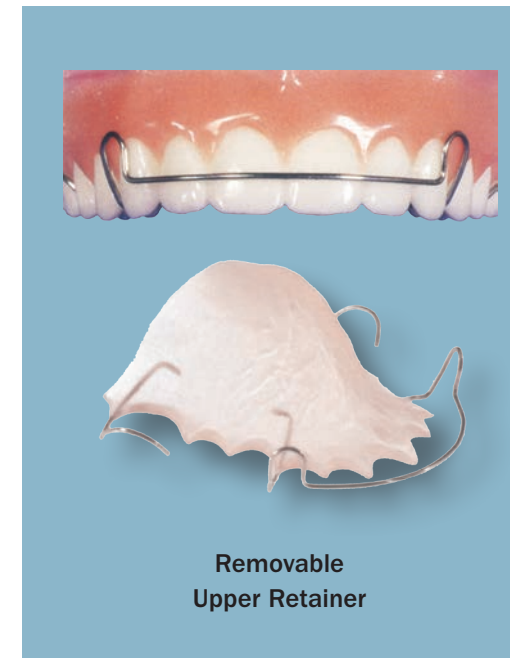
Floss carefully around the gum area.



Floss carefully around each tooth.

## WHEN THE BRACES COME OFF

As soon as your treatment is complete and your braces are removed, you will be given retainers. Proper use of your retainer is essential to establish a stable tooth relationship and keep your smile looking beautiful. Retainers should always be worn as directed by your orthodontist.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q: What if the bands or brackets become loose?

**Answer:** The seal created by the cement has broken. Call your orthodontist's office and schedule an appointment. If the band or bracket detaches from the wire, save it and take it with you to your next appointment.

### Q: What if the archwire or headgear is broken, or a hook or ligature is lost?

**Answer:** These problems could cause the teeth to shift in the wrong direction and must be corrected as soon as possible. Call your orthodontist's office and schedule an appointment.

### Q: What if the mouth feels sore?

**Answer:** To relieve soreness, rinse your mouth with warm salt water and/or take Advil or Tylenol as directed.

### Q: What if there is a wire sticking out and poking the mouth?

**Answer:** Try tucking it in with the eraser part of a pencil. If that doesn't work, dry it with a napkin and place wax over the tip of the wire to prevent further irritation. Wax can also be applied to a bracket or hook that is causing discomfort.

### Q: What if I play a musical instrument?

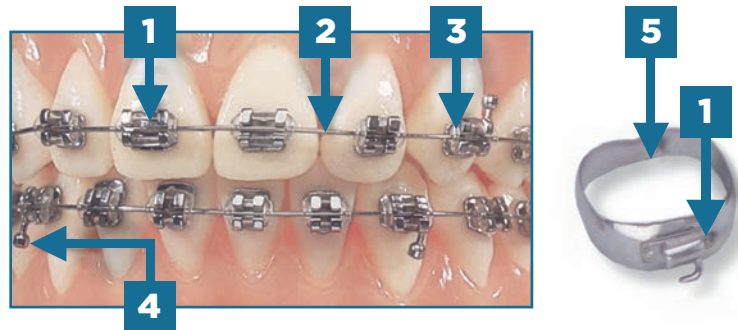
**Answer:** Notify your orthodontist if you play an instrument that comes in contact with your mouth or jaw.

### Q: Should I be taking any extra vitamins during treatment?

**Answer:** It is very important that you get enough Vitamin C during treatment as it helps restore and heal bone and maintain healthy gums. Check with your orthodontist for help in determining which foods might provide enough Vitamin C, or how much Vitamin C supplement you should take.

### Q: What are the names of the different parts of the braces?

- 1. BRACKET** - The attachment bonded to the tooth or welded to the band
- 2. ARCHWIRE** - A large removable wire that fits around the arch into the bracket slots
- 3. ELASTIC LIGATURE** - Plastic ring that ties archwire into bracket or  
**LIGATURE WIRE** - Tiny wire that ties archwire into bracket
- 4. HOOKS** - Used to attach elastics (rubber bands)
- 5. BAND** - A ring of metal, with the bracket attached, that is glued onto the tooth



### Q: What can I do to help insure the success of my orthodontic treatment?

- Answer:**
- ▶ Follow all instructions provided by your orthodontist
  - ▶ Keep your braces and other appliances spotlessly clean
  - ▶ Wear elastics as required
  - ▶ Keep appointments
  - ▶ Keep your teeth clean by brushing and flossing as required
  - ▶ Maintain a healthy diet

## AFTER ORTHODONTICS...WHAT THEN?

Creating a healthy, cosmetically pleasing smile is an important achievement. Maintaining that condition is still another goal. Continuing to sleep wearing your retainer (consider your retainer as pajamas for your teeth) is a good insurance policy. Straight teeth alone, however, do not ensure that your teeth will stay healthy throughout your life. Daily maintenance and regular checkups with your family dentist are required to prevent periodontal disease from destroying all the effort that you have put forth to achieve your "super smile."







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