



Orthodontics

Orthodontic treatment is the technique used for straightening teeth that are out of line. It can be used to close gaps and realign teeth and improve the way teeth bite together

Why have orthodontic treatment?

Correction of the position of badly misaligned teeth is desirable to improve the appearance of your smile and the function of your bite. The optimal time for orthodontic treatment is between 11 and 16 years of age and is often started as soon as possible. There is, however, no age restriction and there are an increasing number of adults being successfully treated.

Who does orthodontic treatment?

Although simple orthodontic treatment can be carried out by all dentists, it is more usual for patients to be referred to an orthodontist who has completed specialist training.

Assessment for orthodontic treatment

A full assessment for orthodontic treatment requires models and X rays. These clinical records are usually taken at the first visit when the patient's expectations are assessed. The full range of treatment options are then discussed with the patient, and parents if necessary.

An initial assessment can be carried out by the orthodontist when a child is between 9 and 13 years old.

How much will it cost?

The cost varies according to the patient's treatment requirements. Some treatment for children is still available on the NHS depending on the severity of the problem.

Braces

Tooth movements are carried out by braces which can be either fixed or removable. The fixed braces give more control over tooth movement and often obtain the best results. A removable brace can be used for simple tooth movement or, in certain circumstances as initial treatment prior to fixed braces. Dental extractions are sometimes necessary to create space in the mouth to align crooked teeth and to improve the bite. Nowadays aligners are commonly used instead of the metal or ceramic brackets attached to the teeth. Aligners are clear stents that fit over the teeth and are changed approximately every two weeks to gradually correct the bite.

When treatment is finished a "retainer" is often used to hold the teeth in their new position. The most common form of retainer is removable and will be required every night for at least twelve months after the fixed brace has been taken out, and then less frequently for an indefinite period.

Finally it is essential that you continue to attend your usual dentist for regular inspections whilst undergoing orthodontic treatment!



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