

ADULT ORTHODONTICS

Is it painful?

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

How often will I need an appointment?

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

Will I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. It will be important you still have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment. This is so that your teeth can be checked for decay and gums examined for signs of disease.

Will I need to wear another brace once my treatment has finished?

Once the active phase of your treatment has been finished, it will be necessary to wear a retaining brace. This may be removable or it may be fixed behind your front teeth.



A fixed retainer



If you are thinking of having orthodontic treatment as an adult you may have some questions you would like answered first.

Why might I need orthodontic treatment?

Common reasons for having orthodontic treatment are:

- To improve the appearance of the teeth and face. Perhaps your teeth have become more crowded with age or have started to drift following gum disease.
- To move teeth prior to crown or bridgework.
- To improve the health of the teeth and gums.
- To improve function *i.e.* to make it easier to eat.

The pictures below show the teeth before and after orthodontic treatment:



Is it always possible to have braces as an adult?

Age is not necessarily a limiting factor. It more often depends on the type of bite you have, the position of your teeth and the condition of both your teeth and gums. For instance if you have active gum disease, it is important this is brought under control before having a brace.

What types of braces are there?

There are those which can be removed for cleaning, known as removable braces.

The second type of brace is fixed to the teeth and cannot be removed for cleaning. An example of a fixed brace can be seen in the following picture:



Does it have to be so visible?

It is sometimes possible to have tooth coloured brackets on the upper front teeth. These are less visible at a distance, although some of the wires are still likely to be noticeable. Tooth coloured brackets are generally more expensive than metal brackets and are more difficult to remove at the end of treatment. They are not usually placed on lower teeth because they can lead to wear of the opposing upper teeth.



Tooth coloured brackets

It is also sometimes possible to have the brackets placed on the inner side of the teeth (lingual brackets). These are virtually invisible, but are more noticeable to the tongue. They are also more expensive and treatment can take much longer to complete. Only a few orthodontists offer this treatment.



Lingual brackets

How long will treatment take?

It usually takes 12 - 24 months but will vary according to how complex your case is.

If teeth need to be extracted who will do this?

Your own dentist will usually do this.