

INFORMATION SHEET 6 – YOUR FIRST VISIT TO THE ORTHODONTIST



Before you come to see the orthodontist you may have some questions you would like answered about this first visit.

Why have I been referred to the orthodontist?

Your dentist would like specialist advice about the position of your teeth, the orthodontist will let you know at your appointment if you would benefit from orthodontic treatment.

What is orthodontic treatment?

Orthodontic treatment usually involves the wearing of braces (removable or fixed) often the extraction of teeth and very occasionally jaw surgery.

Why might I need orthodontic treatment?

There are three main reasons for having orthodontic treatment:

- To improve the appearance of the teeth
- To improve function, i.e. to make it easier to eat
- To improve the health of the teeth and gums

What will happen at my first appointment?

The orthodontist will have a look at your mouth and teeth using a small mouth mirror and a ruler. X-rays, photographs and moulds (impressions) may also be taken. All of these measurements and records will help the orthodontist decide which treatment is best for you.

What will happen next?

There are likely to be four possible outcomes, each of which will be explained:

1. You are not yet ready for treatment, in which case you may need to see the orthodontist again when you are older.
2. Your dental health is not good enough. This may be due to poor tooth brushing or decayed teeth. Your dentist may send you to the orthodontist again when your oral hygiene has improved.
3. You do not need treatment because the position of your teeth is perfectly acceptable or expected to be.
4. You are ready for treatment and need to decide whether to go ahead.

What happens if I am ready to start treatment?

The orthodontist will explain:

- The options for treatment and which is best for you.
- The pros and cons of treatment.
- How long the treatment will take.
- The commitment needed by you to ensure that the treatment is successful.
- When you can expect the treatment to begin.

At this point you will be given the chance to ask any questions. If you would like to go ahead with the treatment, the orthodontist will ask for written consent.

Who will carry out the treatment?

The orthodontist will carry out the treatment personally. On occasions your own dentist will be asked to treat you under the guidance of the orthodontist. For example, your dentist will usually carry out any extractions that are necessary as part of the treatment.