

## FAQ's

### **Can I be treated on the NHS?**

We accept NHS referrals for patients up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Your dentist can refer your son or daughter for an orthodontic assessment.

On the 1st April 2006, the Department of Health introduced a new system for NHS Orthodontic treatment. Each patient will have their teeth assessed for treatment eligibility using an index. Patients with a low index will not be eligible for NHS treatment funding and no practice will be able to treat that patient on the NHS.

Anyone over the age of 18 and for those patients not eligible for NHS treatment we would be happy to discuss private treatment and finance options.

### **Is there a wait to be seen?**

It will be necessary to join a waiting list before active NHS treatment can begin.

For private patients, there is no waiting list and an appointment will be made for you at a mutually convenient time.

### **Will I need to have teeth extracted?**

If your teeth are crowded, it may not be possible to achieve a stable orthodontic result without extracting some teeth. Using the records taken of your teeth, a decision is made on how we may provide you with the best possible result for your future; this may or may not include extractions.

### **How long will the treatment take?**

This will depend on the complexity of each individual case and the orthodontist will be able to advise you further on this at the end of your first visit. On average treatment times can range from 12 months to 2 years.

### **Does having a brace fitted hurt?**

No. Having a brace fitted is a painless procedure. However, you can experience some discomfort for a few days afterwards. Taking painkillers that you would normally take for a headache should help relieve any discomfort, which should subside within 48 hours.

### **What happens when my brace is put on?**

At your brace fitting appointment brackets are bonded (glued) onto your teeth, a wire is connected to each bracket and bands are fitted around the brackets to secure the wire. During this procedure there is no drilling, no needles and no pain - so don't worry! You will be surprised at how quick the procedure is.

### **Can I return to school the day I receive my braces?**

Yes. There is no reason you cannot return to school the same day.

### **Can I still play sports while I have braces?**

Yes. However, we recommend a mouth guard to cover fixed braces and advise that you take out a removable brace during contact sports and swimming.

### **Will the brace damage my teeth?**

There is a possibility of minor risks to the teeth during orthodontic treatment. These are outlined at your consultation and we ensure that you are fully aware of all the risks associated prior to commencing treatment. Many of these can be reduced or eliminated by following the advice you are given. These risks are mainly caused by poor oral hygiene standards, diet and failure to comply with your orthodontists instructions.

### **Can I have after school appointments?**

NHS treatment will **not** be available outside school hours and will be restricted during school holidays.

Do remember that you will normally only be attending every 10-12 weeks and appointments do not last long. We can try to vary appointment times to cause minimum disruption to schooling. We do not allow advanced block booking.

Private patients can be seen during our early morning sessions and after school appointments are available.

### **Can I have cosmetic braces with my NHS fixed brace?**

Unfortunately the answer is no. Cosmetic (clear) brackets are not approved for use in state funded (NHS) treatment in the UK. At present, this type of appliance is only available to private patients.

### **How much would private treatment cost?**

This depends on the complexity of the case and the orthodontic treatment required. After your private consultation appointment the orthodontist will be able to give you at fully inclusive price for your private treatment. For further information please go to our 'Finance Page'.

### **What are the benefits of private treatment?**

- \* Flexible appointment times
- \* Treatment can begin immediately
- \* Cosmetic and coloured braces available
- \* Addition clinical time

### **What is an emergency appointment?**

If your braces are causing extreme pain or if something breaks, you should call our practice. In most cases, we can address these issues over the phone. You can also find useful advice in our 'Further Information' page on our website. If you require an emergency appointment we will set aside time for you.

### **I'm over 18, am I too old to have my teeth straightened?**

You are never too old to have your teeth straightened. We have many patients ranging from their early twenties to their late 60's! At Smiles Better Orthodontics we have been treating both adults and children for many years with great success.

### **Can I wear braces even though I have crowns and missing teeth?**

Yes. A tooth with a crown will move just like a tooth with a simple filling. When teeth are missing orthodontic treatment will aid in the alignment of the remaining teeth.

### **What is a retainer?**

When fixed braces are removed, the teeth can quickly move back into crooked positions, this is called relapse. The teeth need to be held in their new straight position while the gums and jaw bone "firm up". This is achieved by using retainers and maybe on a long term basis.

### **How long is long term retention?**

This unfortunately means forever on a nightly or perhaps weekly basis, certainly between the ages of 20 to 30, because your face is continually growing all be it very slowly in a vertical direction.

### **Why do I need to continue to wear my retainers?**

As you get older and your face matures, there are forces that continually act on your teeth that can encourage teeth to move and spoil your orthodontic result. Tooth movement occurs for the rest of your life and will occur irrespective of wisdom teeth, previous orthodontic treatment or extractions. No one can predict in any individual case how much the teeth will move but we know that teeth will always move if retainers are not worn to stop this.

The research is clear and orthodontic advice nowadays is to wear your retainers for as long as you want to keep your teeth straight. Once you stop wearing retainers, no matter how long it is since the end of your treatment, there is a risk of tooth movement.

### **What if my retainers feel tight?**

Any tightness is an indication that there is some tooth movement occurring and should be a warning to wear your retainers more than you are at present. Simply increase your wear until there is no tightness and then drop back to alternate nights. This should be done as long as you want straight teeth.

### **What will happen if I choose to stop wearing my retainers?**

Once you stop wearing retainers, your teeth will move. No one can predict how much or how quickly the teeth will move. Do not take advice from family or friends as frequently they are mistaken about the amount of time you need to wear your retainers.

You have agreed to undergo orthodontic treatment to achieve your perfect smile and it is now your responsibility to maintain your result through dedicated retainer wear.

We would not normally carry out re-treatment if you have neglected to wear your retainers as advised.

In cases where relapse results in very mild crowding we will not advise re-treatment, especially if the appearance is good. If there is significant relapse and you wish a further course of fixed brace treatment, you will need to pay for this on a private basis.

### **What do I do if I lose my retainers or they need to be replaced?**

If you lose the retainers, break them, or have difficulty wearing them, please contact the practice immediately for advice. If you fail to contact the practice your teeth may move. If you require a replacement retainer or if you feel that you may require a second set of retainers (spares) these can be provided but there will be a charge.

## **What will I gain from orthodontic treatment?**

The benefits of orthodontic treatment can include the following:

- Removal of dental crowding (or sometimes closing gaps)
- Alignment of the upper and lower dental arches
- Correction of the bite of the teeth so that the front teeth meet on closing and the back teeth mesh together
- Reducing the likelihood of damage to prominent teeth
- Enhancing facial aesthetics
- Accommodating impacted, unerupted or displaced teeth
- Preparation for advanced dental treatment, such as crowns, bridges or dental implants
- Reversing the drifting of the teeth in older patients who have suffered from advanced gum disease