ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

Understanding Orthodontic Treatment

Orthodontic treatment promotes a healthy smile, healthier teeth and gums and a better bite for normal chewing. Orthodontic treatment depends for much of its success on the understanding and co-operation of the patient. This form covers the usual material risks associated with orthodontic treatment. Other factors may also, be described by your orthodontist. You may ask your orthodontist to explain anything you do not understand. While recognising the benefits of healthy teeth and a pleasing smile, you should also be aware that orthodontic treatment has limitations and potential risks and there may be alternative treatment options. You should clarify what is expected of you as a patient, or as the parent of a young patient, to achieve excellent results.

Keep in mind that with orthodontic treatment, like other healing arts, results cannot be guaranteed. The unknown factor in any orthodontic correction is the response of the patient to the orthodontic treatment. Should you have any questions please ask.

Benefits

Orthodontics plays an important role in improving overall oral health and achieving balance and harmony between the face and teeth for a healthy smile, which may enhance one's self esteem. The correct bite of the teeth with healthy muscles and jaw joints will provide optimal chewing function. Properly aligned teeth are easier to brush and so the tendency to decay may be decreased, as may the likelihood of developing disease of the gums and supporting bone. Correctly aligned teeth are less likely to experience abnormal wear. Because of the individual conditions present and the limitations of treatment imposed by nature each specific benefit may not be attainable for every patient.

Risks

All forms of medical and dental treatment including orthodontics, have some risks and limitations. Fortunately, in orthodontics complications are infrequent and when they do occur they are usually of only minor consequence. Nevertheless, they should be considered when making the decision to undergo orthodontic treatment. The principal risks in orthodontic treatment pertain to**:**

1. Oral Hygiene

Orthodontic appliances do not cause tooth decay. Gum disease, tooth decay and permanent markings (decalcification) on the teeth can occur if orthodontic patients eat food containing excessive sugar or do not brush their teeth frequently or properly. These same problems can occur without orthodontic treatment but the risk is greater to an individual wearing braces. It is imperative during orthodontic treatment that extra care be taken with oral hygiene and tooth brushing in particular.

2. Relapse

Teeth may have a tendency to change their positions after treatment. The long term, faithful wearing of retainers should reduce this tendency. Teeth can however, move any time, whether or not they have had orthodontic treatment. This is especially true during the late teen period when active growth of the facial bones is coming to an end. The most vulnerable teeth are those at the front. Throughout life the bite can change adversely from various causes such
as eruption of wisdom teeth, growth or maturational changes, mouth breathing, playing of musical instruments and other oral habits. Very occasionally tooth movements will be severe enough to merit a further course of treatment to ensure a satisfactory result.

3. Periodontal Health

The health of the bone and gums which support the teeth may be affected by orthodontic tooth movement if a condition already exists, and in some rare cases where a condition does not appear to exist. In general, orthodontic treatment lessens the possibility of tooth loss or gum infection due to misalignment of the teeth or jaws. Inflammation of the gums and loss of supporting bone can occur if bacterial plaque is not removed daily with good oral hygiene.

4. Root Shortening

In some patients, the length of the roots of the teeth may be shortened during orthodontic treatment. Some patients are prone to this happening, some are not. It is nearly impossible to predict susceptibility. Usually this shortening does not have significant consequences, but on very rare occasions it may become a threat to the longevity of the teeth involved.

5. Jaw Joints

Occasionally patients may suffer pain or dysfunction in the jaw joints (TMJ). This may present as joint pain, headaches or ear problems. These problems may occur with or without orthodontic treatment. Any of the above noted symptoms should be reported to the orthodontist. Some patients are susceptible to TMJ problems and some are not. Numerous studies have shown that the movement of the teeth during orthodontic treatment is unrelated to the onset of TMJ problems. Just as for painful conditions in other joints, discomfort in TMJ can last from a few days to several weeks or longer.

6. Tooth Vitality

Sometimes a tooth may have been traumatised by a previous accident or a tooth may be decayed or have fillings which can cause damage to the nerve of the tooth. Orthodontic tooth movement in some cases aggravates this condition and in rare instances may lead to loss of tooth vitality and discolouration of the tooth requiring root canal treatment and other dental treatment to restore the colour of the tooth.

7. Loose appliances and discomfort

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8. Atypical Growth

Insufficient excessive or asymmetrical changes in the growth of the jaws may limit the orthodontist's ability to achieve the desired result. If growth becomes disproportionate during orthodontic management the treatment may be prolonged. Growth changes that occur after orthodontic treatment may alter the quality of treatment results and may require further orthodontic treatment. In some cases of atypical growth, the bite may change so much that oral surgery is required to achieve the best possible result.

9. Headgear

If improperly handled, headgear may cause injury to the face. Patients are warned not to wear the appliance during times of boisterous or competitive activity.

10. Treatment Time

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11. Co-operation

Co-operation throughout treatment is your best guarantee of achieving a pleasing smile and a good bite. Failure to co-operate could force the orthodontist to change the procedures and goals of your treatment. As a last resort treatment might have to be suspended. The consequences of early suspension may be worse than no treatment at all. To help achieve the most successful results, the patient must do the following:

a) Keep regularly scheduled appointments.
b) Practice good oral hygiene, including brushing, flossing, etc.
c) Wear orthodontic appliances as indicated
d) Wear elastics if necessary.
e) Eating proper foods so as not to dislodge the appliance (brackets, bands).
f) Wear retainers if needed

If your child is unwilling or unable to cooperate limited results will occur. If the child does not understand the need for treatment or does not themselves buy in to the process treatment will be a failure. This is why it is important you go through all this information with your child and discuss the treatment and commit as necessary. We tend to get better cooperation from a child who understands his or her problem and is enthusiastic for treatment.

12. Complementary aesthetic dentistry

If your teeth vary from normal in the number size or shape of the teeth, achievement of the ideal result (for example, complete closure of excessive space) may require restorative treatment. The most common types of complementary treatment are cosmetic bonding, crown and bridge restorative dental care and periodontal therapy.

13. General Health

General medical problems can affect orthodontic treatment. You should keep your orthodontist informed of any changes to your medical health.

General Information

1. Please note that on top of your regular visits for adjustments to the braces you must see your regular dentist or our hygienist at least 6 monthly, preferably 3 monthly for dental checks (and fillings if needed). Straight teeth at end of the treatment with holes or cavities are unsightly and may be lost at an early age. The quote given does not include regular dental check-ups.
2. Repair of a broken appliance or replacement of an appliance incurs additional costs.
3. If more than two brackets or bands are broken within the treatment time, an additional fee of $50 will apply for each broken bracket and band.

4. Mouthguards are recommended for contact sports to protect the child and the appliance.
5. The total time required to complete treatment may exceed our estimate. Excessive or deficient bone growth, poor oral hygiene or poor cooperation in wearing an appliance the required hours per day, broken appliances and missed appointments can lengthen the treatment time, affect the quality of the results and increase the cost of treatment.
6. We adopt a team approach to provide the highest possible standard of treatment by our qualified team members; specialist orthodontist, paediatric dentist, hygienists, and dental auxiliaries.
7. Once orthodontic treatment has been completed, the use of retainers after braces is a very important part of the continuing maintenance of teeth.

Fixed Retainers

The fixed type of retainer is usually a thin wire worn across the back of the lower or upper front teeth, which is bonded in place with a cement similar to that applied on the brackets of braces.

Removable Retainers

We provide a set of removable retainers to every patient. They resemble a thin, clear tray, which fits snugly over your teeth to keep them still and will be fitted the week following your brace treatment or where appropriate, posted to you so that you can fit them at home. Don't worry if your teeth move slightly in the meantime – your retainers will squeeze everything back into place.

Working Together for the Best Outcome

Orthodontic treatment is an important investment in long-term dental health and self-confidence. While it offers many benefits, it also involves responsibilities and potential risks, as outlined above.

Please take the time to go through this information with your child. Ensuring they understand their treatment and are enthusiastic about it greatly improves cooperation and results.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask. We are here to help guide you through every step of the orthodontic journey.

We look forward to working with you and your family.

Kind regards,

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