

# RISKS AND BENEFITS

## ORTHODONTICS

Orthodontics is the branch of dentistry concerned with facial growth, development of the dentition and correction of any irregularities. You may have been referred here by your dentist because he/she feels you would benefit from the expert opinion of the orthodontist. Or, you may have requested to be sent here because you would like to have straighter teeth. There are of course many benefits to having orthodontic treatment. Likewise, as with any medical or dental procedure, there are also risks. The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with all the necessary information for you to make an informed decision about your treatment.

## BENEFITS

- A nice smile is consistently ranked as one of the most important attributes to beauty and plays a key part in the all-important 'first impression'. Aside from the obvious aesthetic advantage of a nice smile, research has shown that children who do have braces have greater satisfaction with their dental appearance, self-esteem and confidence than children who choose not to go ahead with treatment.
- Teeth which meet together correctly are better for tearing and chewing food.
- % of the population have missing teeth, orthodontics can close any spaces improving both aesthetics and function.
- Less likely to sustain dental injuries due to protruding front teeth.
- No excessive wear on individual teeth.
- No trauma to the gums or palate caused by displaced teeth.
- No root resorption caused by impacted teeth.

## RISKS

- **Decalcification** is the loss of calcium from the enamel causing white marks on the teeth. It occurs in around 50% of orthodontic patients. In simple terms, this happens when sugar (fizzy drinks, sweets, biscuits etc.) mix with plaque (which hasn't been brushed off the teeth) to produce an acid. This acid is what causes the white marks. Decalcification is preventable and reversible (only initially). If at any point during orthodontic treatment there is cause for concern regarding tooth brushing, the orthodontic therapist will inform the patient and parent. Thus excellent oral hygiene and plaque removal are essential.
- **Length of treatment** depends on the complexity of treatment, growth and patient cooperation. The total treatment time may be longer or shorter than estimated. Favourable or unfavourable growth, lack of co-operation, broken appliances and missed appointments are all important factors which could lengthen treatment time and affect the quality of the result. Occasionally, a person who has grown normally may not continue to do so. In such cases, the treatment objectives may have to be altered, as skeletal growth is beyond the orthodontist's control.
- **Results** We will try to achieve the best result possible for each of our patients however, the success of treatment depends on your cooperation in keeping appointments, following the orthodontist's instructions, maintaining excellent oral hygiene, ensuring plaque removal and avoiding breakages.
- **Root resorption** is when the roots of the teeth are worn away, making the root length shorter. Most orthodontic patients experience 1-2mm root resorption per 2 year treatment period. Many different studies have been done and the exact cause is unknown although it is thought to have an 85% genetic influence. There are factors that make individuals more prone to having root resorption, these include; previous trauma to teeth, nail biting, blunt, pipette shaped or short roots. The X-rays you have taken will allow the orthodontist to see the shape and size of the roots and advise if there are any concerns.



- **Inflammation** of the gums will occur if tooth brushing is not kept to a high standard. Gums may also bleed when brushing but this will subside when oral hygiene improves.
- **Tooth Vitality** – Teeth that have deep fillings or have suffered even minor trauma can die over a long period of time, with or without orthodontic treatment. It is rare for tooth movement to cause a tooth to die, but an undetected tooth that is already dead may cause symptoms during orthodontic treatment and require root treatment/
- **Pain** It is normal to experience some level of discomfort following adjustment appointments. This will normally last between 4-7 days and is due to the teeth moving through the bone into a better position. Pain relief can be taken if necessary.
- **Impacted teeth** - Teeth may become impacted (stuck in the bone or gum) this can happen if the teeth are crowded, strangely shaped or for reasons unknown. The orthodontist will provide you with additional information if there are any impacted teeth including treatment and any risks involved.
- **Relapse** is the term used to describe the return, following orthodontic correction, to the original features presented. After treatment is complete and the brace is removed, the teeth will want to return to their original position. To combat this, each patient is provided with custom made retainers (clear gum shields) to hold the teeth in the corrected position. If these retainers are not worn as advised by the orthodontist, the teeth will move! It is the responsibility of the patient to wear these.
- **Periodontal disease** also known as gum disease can be worsened by a course of orthodontic treatment. If you have gum disease, it must be controlled before starting and monitored throughout treatment.
- **Non ideal results** due to the wide variation in tooth shape, size and number it may not always be possible to give each patient ‘a perfect result’. Some restorative dental treatments may be indicated and this can be discussed with the orthodontist/family dentist.

Normally excellent orthodontic results can be achieved

You have decided to undergo orthodontic treatment. As this is a serious undertaking, you should be aware of the commitment that you will have to make to ensure that the best possible treatment result is obtained.

Normally, excellent orthodontic results can be achieved with close cooperation between patient, orthodontist and, where relevant, parent. The above information is supplied routinely to anyone considering orthodontic treatment.

At your first treatment appointment the patient/parent/loco parentis will be required to sign a consent form which is specific to your treatment pathway. Please do contact us with any questions.

The treatment will be carried out by a person with appropriate experience who may be a Qualified Orthodontic therapist or one in training, a Specialist in Orthodontics or a Dentist with a special interest in orthodontics.

**YOU MUST SUSTAIN AND MAINTAIN ORAL HEALTH THROUGHOUT TREATMENT.**

Name:.....

Relationship to patient:

Signature:

Date: