

## Your Smile is a Window



Your smile is your greeting to the world. It's also a window to an important part of your dental health — the alignment of your teeth.

Not everyone is born with beautiful teeth. Crooked teeth or spaces between the teeth may be a source of embarrassment or self-conscious-

ness. Improperly aligned teeth and jaws — called a “malocclusion” — also can lead to tooth decay and a host of sometimes painful dental disorders.

The good news is that orthodontic treatment can correct these problems ... and help you achieve a healthy, beautiful smile that's good for life.

What would you like to know about orthodontics? Inside are answers to some of the most asked questions about orthodontics.



Your orthodontist, a member of the American Association of Orthodontists, sincerely thanks you for placing your confidence in him/her to treat your orthodontic needs. If you have any questions or concerns in the future, please consult your orthodontist.

# All About Orthodontics

## Helping People Achieve Healthy, Beautiful Smiles

Orthodontists receive an additional two to three years of specialized education beyond dental school to learn the proper way to align and straighten teeth. Only those with this education may call themselves “orthodontists,” and only orthodontists are eligible for membership in the American Association of Orthodontists.

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American Association of  
Orthodontists



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# Questions and Answers

# A Smile That's Good for Life®

## What causes orthodontic problems?

Most orthodontic problems are inherited. Examples of these genetic problems are crowding, spacing, protrusion, extra or missing teeth and some jaw growth problems. Other malocclusions are acquired by thumb- or finger-sucking, dental disease, accidents, the early or late loss of baby (primary) teeth, or other causes.

## Why is treatment so important?

Crooked and crowded teeth are hard to clean and maintain. A bad bite can also cause abnormal wear of tooth surfaces, difficulty in chewing and/or speaking, and excess stress on supporting bone and gum tissue. Without treatment, many problems become worse and can require additional dental care later in life.



## Why select an orthodontist?

Orthodontists are dental specialists who diagnose, prevent and treat dental and facial irregularities. They receive an additional two to three years of specialized education beyond dental school to learn the proper way to align and straighten teeth. Only those with this formal education may call themselves “orthodontists,” and only orthodontists may be members of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO).



## When should children get an orthodontic check-up?

The AAO recommends that your child get an orthodontic check-up no later than age 7. By this age, orthodontists can spot subtle problems with jaw growth and emerging teeth while some baby teeth are still present. That's important, because some orthodontic problems may be easier to correct if they're found early. Most orthodontic patients begin active treatment between ages 9 and 14.

## Can adults benefit from orthodontic treatment?

Orthodontic treatment can be successful at almost any age. In fact, about one in every five orthodontic patients today is over age 18. Thanks to today's smaller, less visible, more comfortable orthodontic appliances, including fixed braces and removable appliances, adults are finding treatment more appealing.

## What is my role in treatment?

Orthodontic treatment is a partnership of the doctor and patient. The orthodontist provides custom-made fixed or removable appliances that use gentle pressure to move teeth into their proper positions. For the patient, orthodontic treatment always requires following the orthodontist's instructions, keeping scheduled orthodontic appointments and maintaining excellent oral hygiene to achieve the best results. You will also need to see your general dentist as recommended to continue your general dental care.

## How long does treatment take?

Patients who need orthodontic treatment generally have one to three years of active treatment, plus retention.

## How much does treatment cost?

The cost of orthodontic treatment will depend on many factors, including the severity of the problem, its complexity and length of treatment. Your orthodontist will be glad to discuss the cost of treatment and your financing options with you before treatment begins. Patients are finding that braces are more affordable today than ever.

