

1. Is the Doctor a Specialist?

Orthodontists receive an additional 2-3 years of specialized education, beyond the 4 years of dental school, to learn the proper way to straighten and align teeth. Orthodontists practice orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics exclusively. All orthodontists are dentists, but only 6% of dentists are orthodontists. Look for the seal of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO). Only orthodontic specialists can belong to the AAO.



2. When should my child have the first evaluation?

Most parents are shocked that their first or second-grader has been referred to the orthodontist. Although the overwhelming majority of patients this age do not require early

treatment, the American Association of Orthodontists recommends a screening by the age of 7 in order to rule out possible problems that can be much harder to correct in later years. If you see one of the following problems, call your orthodontist to schedule a screening exam to see if your child can benefit from early treatment.



3. Is the First Visit Free of Charge?

Most orthodontists offer free examinations for new patients so that you and your family can get the expert advice about treatment needs, treatment options and the timing of treatment before making this important investment.

4. When is the Ideal Time for Orthodontic Treatment?

Orthodontic treatment is possible at any age, but there is an ideal time when the most conservative techniques will produce the best results. The orthodontic specialist is specifically trained to determine this ideal time. Skeletal (jaw size) discrepancy treatment must be initiated while there is enough growth remaining. Otherwise, compromises and compensations will be needed.



5. Do You Treat Adults?

Orthodontics is not just for kids! In fact 20% of orthodontic patients in the United States are adults. Many adults are finding out how a new attractive smile can improve their overall confidence and self esteem, while others seek orthodontic treatment to improve their dental and oral health or to avoid functional bite issues.

6. How Has Technology Changed Braces?

Orthodontics isn't what it used to be. Computer-designed braces and wires can dramatically increase the precision of tooth movement and shorten treatment time. Tie-free braces systems promote more comfort and more efficient treatment. Clear braces offer a cosmetically pleasing alternative while Invisalign offers the patient a brace-free option! Invisalign now has a special treatment system just for teens. Orthodontists can even place braces behind your teeth, providing another esthetic option for adults and teens.



7. Does the Quoted Fee Include Retainers?

The goal of orthodontic treatment is to straighten the teeth and keep them straight! Make sure you discuss with your orthodontist the different retainer options for your specific case and ask if retainers are included in the treatment fee.



8. Is there a Charge for Emergency Appointments?

Some discomfort can be anticipated with braces. Adjustments for poking wires and loose appliances are typically provided free of charge. However, some offices do charge for damaged or broken appliances due to negligence or non-compliance with dietary restrictions. Please do your best to avoid breaking your braces. Broken braces can result in delayed treatment and compromised results.

9. What Payment Options Are Available?

Orthodontists can offer a number of affordable payment options. Zero-down, no-interest payment plans are available to help those patients who really want braces, but cannot afford a large down payment. For your convenience, look for an office that accepts most insurance plans and will work hard to help you receive the maximum benefit from your dental insurance.



10. Does the Office Make My Child Feel Special?

Let's face it, orthodontics is largely an elective procedure with no shortage of providers to deliver what you need. Your orthodontist should strive to make each visit to the office something to smile about!

