

# WHY ORTHODONTICS?

Orthodontic treatment manages growth and correction of dental and facial structures. Orthodontics is commonly used in the treatment of bite problems, including abnormal tooth wear, TMJ problems and smile esthetics. Treatment is aimed at changing the position of the teeth.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Why is tooth position important?*

If there is a problem in the way the upper and lower teeth fit together in biting or chewing, teeth may wear and fracture, and jaw joints and muscles may become painful. Over time, this may result in crooked, crowded, or protruding teeth. It may affect a person's appearance, speech, or ability to eat.



Metal Brackets

2. *What causes tooth position problems?*

Tooth position problems may be inherited or acquired. Inherited conditions may include missing or extra teeth, abnormal spaces or crowding of teeth, mouth and jaw size and shape, and atypical formations of the jaws and face, including cleft palate. These conditions may be acquired through airway development issues, tongue positioning, enlarged tonsils and adenoids that lead to mouth breathing, clenching, grinding, habits like finger or thumb sucking, premature loss of teeth from an accident or dental disease, and medical conditions.



Clear Brackets

3. *What are the consequences of improper tooth positions?*

Although the consequences range from symptom free to painful, increased stress on the oral structures can have far reaching results. Tooth decay or abnormal signs of wear on chewing surfaces may occur in areas of tight overlap. Excessive wear and fracture of teeth, as well as jaw joint, muscular and nerve problems may occur to the extent that appearance, speech or ability to eat may be affected.



Clear Aligner Trays

4. *How is this diagnosed or detected?*

When orthodontic problems are suspected, diagnostic records may be taken for further study. These records include photos, special x-rays and impressions or digital scans. The records are analyzed to determine the extent of malocclusion and the appropriate treatment. Braces are metal or ceramic brackets bonded to the teeth. A wire is then used to place pressure on the teeth causing them to move to the desired location.

5. *What are treatment options?*

Traditional orthodontic treatment, commonly known as braces, is often used to correct tooth position problems. Orthodontics can also be completed using a series of clear trays, each one putting progressive pressure on the teeth to move them into position. Common brand names of this type of treatment include Invisalign and ClearCorrect. There are also combination therapies using braces, clear aligner trays, and even surgery.

6. *How long does treatment usually last?*

Depending on the cause and severity of the malocclusion and the appliances used in treatment, a patient may expect correction of the condition to last 18-30 months. The length of treatment time is also affected by how well the patient follows orthodontic instructions.