

## The Risks and Benefits of Orthodontic Treatment

There are many benefits to having orthodontic treatment and 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'. Apart from the obvious aesthetic advantage of a nice smile, it may help with better self-esteem and confidence.
- Teeth which meet together correctly are better for tearing and chewing food.
- 5% 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 and No trauma to the gums or palate caused by displaced teeth.
- No excessive wear on individual teeth and No root resorption caused by impacted teeth.

### Risks

- **Decalcification** is early decay causing white marks on the teeth. It 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 thus excellent oral hygiene and plaque removal are essential during treatment.
- **Length of treatment** depends on the complexity of treatment, growth and patient cooperation. Lack of co-operation, broken appliances and missed appointments are all important factors which lengthen treatment time and affect the quality of the result.
- **Root resorption** is when the roots of the teeth are worn away, making the root length shorter. Most patients experience 1-2mm root resorption during treatment. The risk factors that make individuals more prone to having excessive root resorption include; previous trauma to teeth, nail biting, blunt, pipette shaped or short roots.
- **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 period of time. Previously traumatised teeth have a greater incidence of dying during treatment.
- **Pain** It is normal to experience some level of discomfort following fitting of the brace and adjustment appointments. This will normally last between 4-7 days. Pain relief can be taken if necessary.
- **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. Retainers require life long maintenance and therefore have cost implications to you. Retention is considered life long and as such if you want your teeth to remain straightened then wearing your retainers lifelong is essential.
- **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.

## **YOUR treatment and what WE expect from YOU**

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.

- 1) Oral hygiene must be of the highest standard and maintained during treatment or the braces will be removed early to protect your dental health. The priority at Smile Orthodontics is oral health and not just straight teeth.
- 2) Braces must be worn as directed to obtain the desired result.
- 3) You must visit your general dental practitioner regularly for routine dental care
- 4) You must avoid hard or sticky foods, sugary or fizzy drinks and snacks between meals
- 5) You must look after your braces to avoid breakages for efficient and effective treatment.
- 6) You must keep your appointments for the appliance (braces) to be adjusted regularly
- 7) You must wear your retainers as directed and indefinitely otherwise your teeth will not remain straightened.

Excellent orthodontic results can be achieved with close cooperation between patient and orthodontist.

*Please sign that you have read and understood the risks and benefits of orthodontic treatment and what is expected from you during your treatment.*

**Patient Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Patient / Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Patient / Relationship to patient:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_