

General FAQ's:

1. At what age should I schedule an appointment for an orthodontic screening?

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends an orthodontic screening at age 7. By this age, several permanent teeth in most children have erupted, allowing us to effectively evaluate your orthodontic condition.

2. How long will it take to complete treatment?

Treatment time obviously depends on each patient's specific orthodontic problem. In general, treatment times range from 12 to 30 months. The "average" time frame a person is in braces is approximately 22 months.

3. How much do braces cost? Are financing options available? How does my insurance work?

It is impossible to give an exact cost for treatment until we have examined you. We will cover the exact cost and financial options during the initial examination. We have many financing options available to accommodate your needs, and we will review these with you. We will also review your insurance policy and help to maximize your benefit and file your claims.

4. Will my teeth straighten out as they grow?

No, they will not. The space available for the front teeth does not increase as you grow. In most people, after the permanent molars erupt, the space available for the front teeth decreases with age.

Emergency FAQ's

A Major Emergency

There are only a few true orthodontic (or dental) emergencies. They include:

- Trauma or injury to the teeth, face or mouth
- Infection or swelling of the gums, mouth or face
- Severe, unmanageable discomfort or pain in these areas

In any of these situations, you should seek help as soon as possible — go to an emergency room, if that's your best option. Generally, however, the place to start is with your regular dentist.

Remember that he or she is trained to handle a range of dental problems, and can most likely offer the necessary diagnostic tools, anesthetics and treatments you need. If, for example, you have a fractured tooth, your dentist will treat the immediate problem and arrange for the tooth's restoration; afterwards your orthodontic treatment plan can be adjusted as needed. Likewise,

severe pain or swelling could be a sign of infection or disease, which a dentist or periodontist is best able to treat.

1. What should I do if a wire is poking me?

As the teeth start to move, the wire that connects them (known as an arch wire) may begin poking near the back of the mouth or irritating the cheeks. You can try moving the wire into a better position with a pencil eraser or a Q-Tip. If the wire won't move, you may be able to cut the end off with a nail clipper sterilized in alcohol — but before doing so, please call our office for our guidance or instructions. Often, you can also use sterilized tweezers to gently move a misplaced wire or a tie that's causing problems.

When wires or brackets cause irritation, covering the metal parts with wax will often help ease the discomfort. As with any of these types of problems, if you are unable to resolve the issue with this guidance then call our office and we'll schedule a time to see you.

2. My bracket broke, what should I do?

This problem is often caused by eating hard or sticky candy or food or playing with the braces. If the band or bracket is still attached to the wire, leave it as is — but don't connect any elastics to it! You can cover it with orthodontic wax if it's irritating the inside of your mouth. If it has come off, save it. In either case, call our office to let us know what happened, and we will schedule a visit. Be sure to bring any loose parts with you to the appointment!

3. General tooth pain or loosening

It's normal for teeth to become slightly loosened during orthodontic treatment — that shows they're moving! Sometimes, this movement may be accompanied by tenderness, especially after braces are placed or adjusted. For minor soreness, you can use your regular over-the-counter pain reliever. A twice-a-day salt-water rinse may also help: Mix one teaspoon of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water, and rinse for 30 seconds. A warm washcloth or heating pad placed on the outside of the jaw can also offer some relief.

While actual emergencies are rare, our goal is to make orthodontic treatment as comfortable as possible. If you need additional advice, don't hesitate to call us!

