



ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT: THE RISKS & BENEFITS

The following information is simply routine. Orthodontic treatment has a positive and long-lasting effect on one's life. And while the benefits of healthy teeth and a beautiful smile outweigh the potential risks, you should be aware before undergoing any kind of treatment.

The Benefits:

Orthodontics plays an important role in improving overall oral health and achieving balance and harmony between the teeth and face for a beautiful, healthy smile.

- An attractive smile enhances one's self-esteem improving overall quality of life.
- Properly aligned teeth are easier to brush minimizing risk of decay and diseases of the gums and supporting bone.
- Improves bite, evenly distributing chewing (and grinding) stress on bones, roots, gum tissue and joints.

Potential Risks:

In orthodontics, complications are rare and often times minor, such as:

- Tooth decay, gum disease and permanent markings (decalcifications) on the teeth if the patient eats foods containing excessive sugar or does not brush frequently or properly.
- Shortening in the length of the roots of the teeth, which can affect the longevity of the teeth involved.
- Inflammation of the gums and loss of supporting bone can occur if bacterial plaque is not removed daily with good oral hygiene.
- Teeth may change position after treatment and over time, especially if the patient does not faithfully wear a retainer.
- Jaw and related joint pain (i.e. temporomandibular joints (TMJ), headaches and ear problems.
- Tooth movement can aggravate a tooth that may have been traumatized prior causing nerve pain. In rare instances, a root canal may be needed.
- Gums, cheeks and lips may be scratched or irritated by a loose or broken appliance.
- Tenderness post-adjustment. This may last anywhere from 24 to 48 hours.
- Atypical formation of teeth or insufficient or abnormal changes in the growth of the jaws. If growth becomes disproportionate during or after treatment or a tooth forms late, the bite may alter results thus requiring additional treatments or oral surgery.
- Brackets can break causing attrition and enamel flaking or fracturing on de-bonding. Fractured brackets or remnants of a fractured bracket can be harmful if swallowed or aspirated.

Some patients may require restorative dental treatment, like cosmetic bonding, crown and bridge restoration, and periodontal treatment when they get their braces off. Always ask for referrals.