

# Adult Orthodontics

A healthy, beautiful smile at any age



American  
Association of  
Orthodontists®

My Life. My Smile. My Orthodontist.®



# It's never too late to move healthy teeth

Today, one orthodontic patient in five is an adult. You're never too old to benefit from orthodontic treatment. No matter what your age, proper alignment of teeth contributes to your good health and a beautiful smile.

## Maintaining dental health

Leaving misaligned teeth untreated may lead to other dental problems such as tooth decay and gum disease, as well as abnormal wearing of tooth enamel and difficulty in chewing. Orthodontic treatment can contribute to good dental health.

Advances in orthodontics have made treatment more comfortable and more successful than ever for people of all ages. Orthodontists work with other dental practitioners — general dentists, periodontists, prosthodontists, oral surgeons — to provide a comprehensive approach to your dental health.

## Looking good

Orthodontic treatment can correct crooked teeth or spaces that you've been self-conscious about for years. It can give you the confidence and pride that come with straight teeth and a great smile.

# Questions and Answers

## Is orthodontic treatment effective for adults?

Yes. Age is not a consideration when it comes to orthodontic treatment. Healthy teeth can be moved successfully at any age. Orthodontic treatment creates a better bite, making teeth fit better, and decreases the risk of future dental problems regardless of age.

## Can I get an appliance that is less noticeable?

Thanks to the variety of “appliances” (such as clear aligners and various bracket types) used by orthodontists, adults may be able to inconspicuously achieve the great smile they want. Many of today’s treatment options are designed to minimize the appearance of the appliance and better fit an adult lifestyle. Ask your orthodontist about treatment options that are appropriate for you.

## Will orthodontic treatment fit my lifestyle?

Certainly. You can do almost anything during orthodontic treatment — sing, play a musical instrument, dine out, kiss, and even have your picture taken. Some temporary adjustments will be necessary, but if you’re like the vast majority of adult patients, you’ll adapt quickly.



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## Am I a good fit for orthodontic treatment?

A consultation with an orthodontist will determine if you can benefit from treatment. After carefully analyzing the nature of your orthodontic problem, your orthodontist can recommend how you can achieve a healthy and beautiful smile.

## I’m missing some teeth. Can orthodontic treatment improve my bite?

Whether you are planning to replace missing teeth or not, you may benefit from a consultation with an orthodontist. If replacements for missing teeth are planned, an orthodontist can help keep the necessary space open. If no replacements are planned, an orthodontist may be able to stabilize your teeth so that shifting does not occur or is minimized. Your orthodontist will work with your dentist or dental specialist to achieve the best result.

## How often will I need to come in for appointments?

Advances in today’s orthodontic materials mean patients see the orthodontist only about once every six weeks during active treatment.

## Does orthodontic treatment hurt?

New techniques and materials today have made orthodontic treatment more comfortable than ever. Discomfort, if any, is short-lived and can be managed using over-the-counter analgesics.

## I’ve been treated for gum disease. Can I have orthodontic treatment?

Your orthodontist will need to consult with your dentist and/or periodontist about the health of your gums. If you are a candidate for orthodontic treatment, you will continue regular visits with your dentist and/or periodontist. For many patients, proper tooth alignment can contribute to healthy gums.

## How much does treatment cost?

The cost of orthodontic treatment depends on many factors, including the severity of the problem, its complexity and length of treatment. Your orthodontist will be glad to discuss fees with you before treatment begins.

Many patients find that orthodontic treatment is more affordable today than ever. Most orthodontists offer a variety of convenient payment plans. Employers may offer dental insurance plans with orthodontic benefits, and/or the option to set aside pre-tax dollars in a flexible spending account or other health savings account.

## Why select an orthodontist?

Orthodontists are dental specialists who diagnose, prevent and treat dental and facial irregularities. They receive an additional two to three years of specialized education beyond dental school to learn the proper way to align and straighten teeth. Only those who successfully complete this formal education may call themselves “orthodontists,” and only orthodontists may be members of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO).

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If you have any questions or concerns throughout your treatment or in the future, please consult your orthodontist or visit [mylifemysmile.org](http://mylifemysmile.org).



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