



# Andover Smile Centre

## Orthodontic Clinic and Implant Studio

## A Guide to Orthodontics

### **What is orthodontic treatment?**

Orthodontic treatment is a way of straightening or moving teeth, to improve the appearance of the teeth and how they work. It can also help to look after the long-term health of the teeth, gums and jaw joints by spreading the biting pressure over all the teeth.

### **Why should I have orthodontic treatment?**

Many people have crowded or crooked teeth. Orthodontic treatment will straighten the teeth or move them into a better position. This not only improves their appearance, but also the way they bite together, whilst also making them easier to clean.

In some patients the upper front teeth can stick out and look unsightly. These 'prominent' teeth are more likely to be damaged, but orthodontic treatment can move them back into line. In others, the way the upper and lower jaws meet can cause teeth to look unsightly and lead to an incorrect bite. Orthodontic treatment may be able to correct both.

When the teeth don't meet correctly, this can put strain on the muscles of the jaw, causing jaw and joint problems and in some cases headaches. Orthodontic treatment can help you to bite more evenly and reduce the strain.

### **At what age should I have orthodontic treatment?**

Orthodontic treatment is generally best carried out in children, but adults can have orthodontic treatment. Age is less important than having the proper number of teeth. In children it may be necessary to wait for enough teeth to come through before starting treatment.

### **What does it involve?**

The most important thing is to have a full examination. This will usually involve looking at your teeth, taking x-rays and making a plaster model of your teeth.

Your dentist will then discuss with you which treatments are possible. Once you are sure you want to go ahead, the treatment can begin as soon as you have enough permanent teeth.

### **How many visits will it take?**

Orthodontic appliances usually need adjusting every 4 to 6 weeks. Your orthodontist will tell you how often your appliance will need to be adjusted.

## **Will it hurt?**

All appliances may feel strange to begin with and can cause discomfort. If the problem doesn't go away your orthodontist may be able to make adjustments to help. Teeth are usually uncomfortable immediately after adjustment but this will settle.

## **How successful will it be?**

Success depends on a partnership between the skills of your orthodontist and the enthusiasm and help of the patient or parents.

It is important to attend regularly and carry out any instructions you are given by your orthodontist.

## **Is orthodontic work permanent?**

Even after retention, it is normal for minor tooth movements to happen throughout your life, so no permanent guarantee can be given. However it is unusual for teeth to alter enough to require further treatment.

Practice Information:

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