

reason to smile!

Ugly teeth, be gone! With the new orthodontics treatments available, there's no reason not to have an attractive smile.

I am an adult with crooked teeth. Should I straighten my teeth?

Looks-wise, a woman with a set of straight and beautiful teeth exudes youthfulness, femininity, and appears confident and professional at the same time. Health-wise, teeth that are well aligned are easier to clean and maintain. This helps prevent the accumulation of bacteria, which can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.

Crooked teeth may also cause

uneven wearing down of teeth and cause an unnatural bite that leads to misalignment of the upper and lower jaws. Therefore a set of well-aligned teeth is a wise investment for better oral health and for a gorgeous smile that will bring out the best in you.

Can my teeth be moved at this age for the treatment to be effective?

Teeth that are surrounded by healthy gums can be moved at *any* age. Teeth move in the same way in adults as teenagers. However, it may take slightly longer to move teeth in adults due to maturity of the bone. Adults may have other issues like missing teeth and gum disease in addition to crooked teeth. Aligning teeth can allow for better replacement of missing teeth and by shifting teeth around, braces treatment can even eliminate the need for tooth replacement.

Will the braces treatment be very painful?

Using the philosophy of light-continuous force to move teeth and together with the latest advancement in braces technology, this discomfort is minimised. There is an initial "getting-used-to" period for any dental treatment (one to two weeks) which can be easily managed with the use of "braces wax"/"soft wax" and mild painkillers (if needed). Ulcers are also less frequent with the smaller dimensions of braces. There is zero downtime. Patients can go about their daily activities straight after braces placement and activation.

The uncomfortable, tight feeling from elastic or metal "ties" used to hold the braces wire in place can now be better managed by replacing the ties with self-ligating brackets. These

gentle "gated" braces are designed with a unique self-locking mechanism incorporated into the bracket face. This not only reduces discomfort but can also shorten overall treatment time.

Any alternatives to metal braces?

Orthodontics has come a long way since the days of large metal brackets. For adults wanting something more discreet, recent advances in technology and materials have much to offer.

- **Ceramic Braces** are made of tooth-coloured porcelain instead of metal. This blends in with the surrounding tooth structure and makes the braces less noticeable.

- The **Invisible Aligner System** of straightening teeth involves a series of custom-moulded aligners worn over your teeth to gradually reposition them to the final aesthetic result. The transparent aligners are thin, comfortable, and hardly noticeable. They can be removed for eating, tooth brushing and flossing and important events. It is important for the aligners to be worn for 20 hours every day for treatment success. Mild to moderate malocclusions (the faulty contact between the upper and lower teeth when the jaw is closed) can be treated successfully with this system.

- **Lingual Braces** are discreet, metal braces that are hidden behind the teeth and are invisible with normal day-to-day activities. It is efficient, looks better and can deal with a broad range of smile problems. Today's lingual brackets are dramatically smaller and slimmer at only 1.5mm, with rounded edges. This makes it comfortable and easy to clean, with little interference to tongue position and speech. Lingual braces can treat cases that cannot be managed by removable clear

aligners (similar to retainers) and eliminates the problems of lost aligners and poor compliance with wearing the aligners, which can disrupt and lengthen treatment.

What should I look out for before investing in treatment?

Every person has a unique bite, and poor alignment can be presented in different ways. It takes a trained and experienced orthodontist who is well versed in a broad range of conditions and techniques to best customise a treatment plan for the individual, based on his/her oral and lifestyle needs.

Qualifications in orthodontics, years of experience and the types of cases frequently treated are some questions to ask your service provider before committing to treatment. A good doctor will also readily educate you on what to expect for the duration of the treatment and where necessary, adjust the treatment plan.

Adult patients often have other dental needs that need attention on top of straightening teeth, such as bleaching the newly aligned teeth to achieve the ultimate aesthetic result. Orthodontists at NDC work closely with their specialist colleagues to customise all treatment plans for a complete dental makeover. Such access could save you valuable time looking for reliable sources of services.

at 40-plus, am I "too old" to wear braces?

The American Association of Orthodontics estimates that 20 per cent of patients seeking braces treatment are adults and this group is getting bigger. As life expectancy increases with modern medicine, we will need our teeth longer than ever. With braces treatment, a more youthful smile can be created and teeth often last longer as it is easier to maintain.

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