



# Orthodontics... Braces... Invisalign

Orthodontics is a dental specialty that is concerned with the study and treatment of malocclusions (improper bites), which may be a result of tooth irregularity, disproportionate jaw relationships, or both.

Orthodontic treatment (dental braces) can re-arrange teeth and control or modify facial growth. It can be carried out for purely cosmetic reasons — improving the general appearance of patients' teeth and face —but also for practical reasons, providing the patient with a functionally improved bite (occlusion).

An orthodontist is a dental specialist in the treatment of dental and facial irregularities. They can tell you how early dental braces treatment can prevent more serious problems from developing. If required, the orthodontist will provide you a complete treatment plan, usually involving dental braces, with a prescription specific to your needs.

- Are easier to keep clean.
- Chew more efficiently.
- Create a better bite, which can reduce headaches and strain on your supporting bone and tissue.

When left untreated, many orthodontic problems become worse, contributing to abnormal wear of tooth surfaces. According to the American Association of Orthodontists, crooked and crowded teeth are hard to clean. This may contribute to not only tooth decay but also eventual gum disease and tooth loss.

Treatment by a dental braces specialist to correct the original problem is often less costly than the dental care required to treat more serious problems later.

you through a thorough clinical and digital imaging examination. If dental braces are appropriate, moulds and impressions are made. These records are analysed to determine the problems and proper treatment. Treatment times vary from six months to three years, depending on types of problems, and the age of the patient. Orthognathic surgery (jaw surgery) may be required in extreme cases.

Most commonly, a fixed multibracket dental braces therapy is used. In this case, orthodontic wires are inserted into dental brackets, which can be made from stainless steel or a more aesthetic ceramic material (invisible braces).

After active dental braces treatment is completed, retainers are worn to prevent teeth from moving back to their original position.

## 2. When is the best time to start?

The best time to start dental braces treatment is usually determined by the orthodontist and varies among individuals.

- Ideal age is usually 12 to 13 years
- It is recommended for a child to have an early examination at age 7, to allow the orthodontist to determine the best time and type of treatment.

## 3. What should I expect during braces treatment?

The first step is for the orthodontist to determine if dental braces are suitable for

## 4. Types of Braces

### • Aesthetic braces

Today's' dental braces are less noticeable than in the past. There are many dental braces systems available for more aesthetic invisible braces that would allow you to smile throughout your treatment.

## 1. Why do braces?

A nice smile is not only beautiful, it also promotes good health. Straight and properly aligned teeth:



- **Ceramic aesthetic braces**

Ceramic invisible braces are a clear alternative to metal dental braces. An attractive translucent and comfortable design gives you all the self-confidence you need to face each day with a smile. The ceramic brackets will not stain or discolour. Ceramic invisible braces may be used whenever metal dental braces are appropriate for dental braces treatment. Consult our orthodontists to evaluate your orthodontic needs.

- **Self-Ligating Appliance Dental Braces System**

The Dental Studio carries the 3M Clarity SL™ Self-Ligating Appliance Dental Braces System. These smartclips are computer designed and are the latest in technology, so they work fast and look good, and give you the result you want- A Beautiful New Smile. They are made from high-tech ceramic with smooth rounded edges and are translucent. Ordinary dental braces use “elastic bands” or “ligatures”, to secure an arch wire into each bracket. Ligatures can become stained, requiring your orthodontist to change them frequently.

They also retain food particles, making it more difficult for you to keep your braces clean. Self-ligating technology removes the need for ligatures. You might be surprised, but ligatures can also slow down your overall treatment progress. Ligatures rub against the arch wire and hinder tooth movement. Without bands to take on and off, your dental appointments can be shorter and more comfortable. Your total treatment time may be shortened too.

- **Invisalign**

Invisalign® is an alternative to straighten your teeth without braces. It is a 3-D computer imaging technology. Invisalign® uses a series of clear removable retainers to straighten crooked teeth invisibly. One of the wonderful things about Invisalign® is that they are invisible, so no one knows you are wearing them.

You can take them out for daily necessities like eating and drinking, brushing, and for special events. No metal wires or bands to irritate your mouth, they are comfortable and convenient.

## How to get started?

### Step 1: See our orthodontists who are certified Invisalign providers

Not all patients are suitable for Invisalign. A proper consultation and examination would be carried out by the orthodontist to assess your suitability for Invisalign or conventional braces. Invisalign is great for people who do not have severe problems, or severely crooked teeth.

### Step 2: Map out a treatment plan

Our doctors will develop a treatment plan specifically for you. Then the doctor takes bite impressions of your teeth, which Invisalign will use to custom-mold a series of clear, removable aligners that will gradually move your teeth into an incredible new smile.

### Step 3: Your aligners are created

The advancements in technology that led to clear aligners were developed by Invisalign. Your aligners are created via precision computer mapping and design, and are then shipped to your doctor. Step 4: Wear your aligners You will receive your aligner series, switching to a new aligner every two weeks as your teeth move. Just wear each set of aligners night and day for a two-week period, removing them only to eat, brush and floss. Your teeth will move little by little with each aligner.

The orthodontist will review your progress regularly. Each case is a little different, but on average, treatment lasts about a year.



This article is written by Dr Woo Mei Yee. Dr Woo is an Orthodontist at The Dental Studio (TDS) where she brings her clinical experience of Orthodontics to enhance many smiles at TDS. She is a visiting Specialist (Orthodontist) at the National Dental Centre, Singapore, and she is also currently an Adjunct Lecturer with National University of Singapore, Faculty of Dentistry, Postgraduate Studies.

Dr Woo graduated with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) from the national University of Singapore. She graduated with numerous awards, including the Dean's list, the IADR book prize and the LC Lien book prize for being the best student in Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry, Periodontics and Dental Public Health. Dr Woo was also awarded the “Best Oral Presentation in Craniofacial Biology Research (IADR 1995 Prize)” for her Master Thesis at the 19th IADR (SEA) meeting.

She obtained her specialist training in Orthodontics through a conjoint Master of Dental Surgery (MDS) Programme with the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. She is also a fellow of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore. Dr Woo spent 11 years in public service. Her research interests include Dental-Facial Orthopaedics in Children, Surgical Orthodontics and Facial Aesthetics related to Orthodontics.

In keeping with her dentistry and orthodontist roles in the community, Dr Woo maintains professional affiliations as a member of both the Singapore Dental Association and Association of Orthodontists in Singapore.

