

6 MYTHS ABOUT BRACES



by Dr. Terry Giangreco



1

Teeth need to be pulled

Modern techniques allow orthodontists the opportunity to make room for crowded teeth in ways that generally don't require permanent tooth extractions. This understanding has lead to an increase in the number of younger children getting braces. You may have noticed that kids are getting braces at younger ages these days, and you're right. We sometimes start children in braces at earlier ages because we understand that we have the opportunity to avoid permanent tooth extractions. Permanent tooth extractions in children and adults can sometimes have a negative impact on the profile. In those cases, if we can avoid taking out teeth, it's a good thing.

2

Palatal expanders are always necessary to widen the palate



Just as light forces have allowed modern orthodontists to make room for teeth without extractions, they have also given us the opportunity to expand the upper teeth without expanders. Rapid palatal expanders activate the growth plate in the middle of the upper jaw allowing the jaw to grow wider. Expansion can be very effective, particularly in younger children. However, once a child is over age 10 expanders become significantly less effective because the growth plate which allows expansion begins to close. Using light forces, especially in teens and adults, does not work at the growth plate and produces stable and much more comfortable expansion. Expansion in adults, which previously required jaw surgery, is now predictable and easily accomplished using braces and light forces.



3

Braces will take at least two years

Advanced orthodontic techniques provide a very different experience than we remember. Faster treatment times are one of the biggest differences you might notice. Many adolescents and adults have the wonderful opportunity to have treatment completed in about a year. Certainly there are situations where treatment time may need to go longer than a year, but ask your orthodontist if there are ways in which treatment might be accelerated. There are devices available to enhance the speed of tooth movement, while decreasing the discomfort at the same time. It's a great time to have orthodontics!

4

Orthodontic treatment costs an arm and a leg



Orthodontic treatment is a worthwhile and wonderful investment and fortunately, it is far easier to finance orthodontic treatment today than it's ever been. Most orthodontic offices provide financing options with little money down and no finance charges. Dental insurance often provides a single, lifetime benefit that may help in the affordability of orthodontic treatment. Flex plans and HSA plans also allow for orthodontic treatment coverage, so being evaluated early (all children by the age of seven) will help in planning Flex and HSA benefit coverage.



5

I'm too old to have orthodontic treatment

The reality is, nothing could be farther from the truth. The teeth and bone in your mouth is no different now than when you were younger. In fact, modern orthodontic techniques allow adults many treatment options that were not available when they were young. Invisalign is a prime example of modern orthodontic advances. Many adults now have the option of enjoying the benefits of orthodontic treatment without the need for braces. How great is that!

6

I need a referral in order to see an orthodontist



Dentistry is not like medicine. With many medical insurances, in order to see a specialist you need to be referred by your primary care physician. If not, some insurances may not cover your visit. This is not the case for dentistry. You do not need to be referred to an orthodontist by your family dentist. All you need to do is pick up the phone and call. And, the best part is that some orthodontists don't charge for the initial consultation. There is no cost and no risk to get the opinion of a specialist so don't be afraid to call and set up a free consultation.



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