

Ronald N. Cummings, D.D.S., M.S.

ORTHODONTICS FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS

ORTHODONTICS AN EXCITING TREATMENT THAT CAN PROVIDE

- Better Health and Comfort
- Improved Appearance
- Enhanced Self Esteem

As a rule, positive orthodontic results can be achieved by informed and cooperative patients. Thus, the following information is routinely supplied to all who consider orthodontic treatment. While recognizing the benefits of healthy teeth and a pleasing smile, you should also be aware that orthodontic treatment has limitations and potential risks. These are seldom enough to avoid treatment, but should be considered in making the decision to undergo orthodontic treatment. Orthodontic treatment usually proceeds as planned; however, like all areas of the healing arts, results cannot be guaranteed.

BENEFITS

Orthodontics plays an important role in improving overall oral health, and in achieving balance and harmony between the teeth and face for a beautiful, healthy smile. An attractive smile enhances one's self esteem, which may actually improve the quality of life itself. Properly aligned teeth are easier to brush, and thereby may decrease the tendency to decay, or to develop diseases of the gum and supporting bone.

Because of the individual conditions present and the limitations of treatment imposed by nature, each specific benefit may not be attainable for every patient. The unknown factor in any orthodontic correction is the response of the patient to the orthodontic treatment.

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROCEDURES

Orthodontics strives to improve the bite by helping to direct the forces placed on the teeth, thus protecting them from trauma during ordinary everyday activities, such as chewing and grinding. Orthodontics distributes the chewing stress throughout the mouth to minimize excessive stress on bones, roots, gum tissue and temporomandibular joints.

Through orthodontic treatment, potential dental problems may be eliminated, including the problem of abnormal wear. Treatment can facilitate good oral hygiene to minimize decay and future periodontal problems. Also, orthodontics can provide a pleasant smile, which can enhance one's self-image.

RISKS

All forms of medical and dental treatment, including orthodontics have some risks and limitations. Fortunately, in orthodontics complications are infrequent and when they do occur they are usually of minor consequence. Nevertheless, they should be considered when making the decision to undergo orthodontic treatment. The major risks involved in orthodontic treatment may include:

1. Tooth decay, gum disease, and permanent markings (decalcification) on the teeth can occur if orthodontic patients eat foods containing excessive sugar and/or do not brush their teeth frequently and properly. These same problems can occur without orthodontic treatment, but the risk is greater to an individual wearing braces.
2. In some patients the length of the roots of the teeth may be shortened during orthodontic treatment. Some patients are prone to this happening, some are not. Usually this does not have significant consequences, but on occasion it may become a threat to the longevity of the teeth involved.
3. The health of the bone and gums which support the teeth may be affected by orthodontic tooth movement if a condition already exists, and in some rare cases where a condition doesn't appear to exist. In general, orthodontic treatment lessens the possibility of tooth loss or gum infection due to misalignment of the teeth or jaws. Inflammation of the gums and loss of supporting bone can occur if bacterial plaque is not removed daily with good oral hygiene.
4. Teeth may have a tendency to change their positions after treatment. This is usually only a minor change and faithful wearing of retainers should reduce this tendency. Throughout life the bite can change adversely from various causes, such as: eruption of wisdom teeth, growth and/or maturational changes, mouth breathing, playing of musical instruments and other oral habits, all of which may be out of the control of the orthodontist.

Signature and Date

