

# The truth about braces

WE ALL know the basics about braces. But do we really know all the benefits that they can provide?

To help unravel any misconceptions about braces, Dr Deborah Sykes from Surf Coast Orthodontics answers some commonly asked questions.

## Why do I need braces to straighten my teeth?

- To improve the appearance of the teeth and to make your bite better
- To improve self esteem and confidence
- For easier cleaning, flossing and brushing
- To improve speech problems especially in growing children
- To avoid damage to gums and teeth due to a poor bite
- To help with some jaw joint problems.

## What are braces?

Braces are little brackets that are 'stuck' on the teeth, and with a light wire gentle pressure is applied to the crooked teeth to move them in the bone into a straighter position.

## How long do I need to wear braces?

Normally braces are worn for up to two years, but depending on the nature of the bite problem it can be shorter or longer. Keeping the gums and teeth healthy and looking after the brace will make the treatment easier and will improve the final result.

## Will my teeth be sore?

Braces can cause some tenderness at the beginning,

but most people say the discomfort is minor and can be controlled by normal pain control.

## Can braces damage my teeth?

The braces themselves do not harm the teeth normally, but if you do not brush your teeth and gums while you have braces on, then you can get decay or gum problems. Also if you have a sugary or high acid diet then the teeth can decay around the brace. This is why we recommend good oral hygiene and diet, and regular checks with your dentist while you have your braces.

## Will my teeth stay straight after braces finish?

After you have braces, you will need to wear retainers which will keep your teeth straight. If you do not wear retainers the teeth may move and become irregular again. Different types of retainers are available and you can even have 'invisible' retainers.

## When should I start braces?

It is advisable to see you for your first orthodontic assessment at around seven years of age, to assess the problem. Early treatment is possible with plates etc, but braces usually start when most of the permanent teeth are present. Many more adults are now starting braces to have their teeth straightened. Confidence to smile improves self esteem and success in life.

For more information or to book an appointment, phone Surf Coast Orthodontics on 5331 9489.



Dr Deborah Sykes can help you achieve that perfect smile.