

Is orthodontic treatment for adults?

BY DR DEBORAH SYKES

IF YOU are thinking of having orthodontic treatment as an adult, you may have some questions you would like answered first.

Some commonly asked questions are:

Why might I need orthodontic treatment?

Common reasons for having orthodontic treatment include:

- To improve the appearance of the teeth and face. Perhaps your teeth have become more crowded with age or have started to drift following gum disease
- To move teeth prior to crown or bridgework

- To improve the health of the teeth and gums
- To improve function (ie. to make it easier to eat).

Is it always possible to have braces as an adult?

Age is not necessarily a limiting factor. It more often depends on the type of bite you have, the position of your teeth and the condition of both your teeth and gums. For instance, if you have active gum disease, it is important this is brought under control before having braces.

Do braces have to be so visible?

It is sometimes possible to have tooth coloured (ceramic) brackets on the upper front teeth. Clear templates may also be used in specific cases and are

not very noticeable.

How long will treatment take?

It usually takes 12-24 months but will vary according to how complex your case is.

Is it painful?

Having the braces fitted is not painful. However, it is common to have slightly tender teeth for three to five days after the fitting and after each adjustment.

How often will I need an appointment?

Once your braces have been fitted, you will need regular appointments for them to be adjusted, about every four to eight weeks.

Will I still need to see my dentist regularly?

Yes. It will be important you still have six-monthly check-ups with your dentist regularly during orthodontic treatment. This is so that your teeth can be checked for decay and gums examined for signs of disease.

Will I need to wear another brace once my treatment is finished?

Once the active phase of your treatment has been finished, it will be necessary to have a period of retention.

For more information, phone Dr Deborah Sykes on 5331 9489.