

Fixed appliances

What is a Fixed Appliance?

- Fixed appliances are made up of brackets and bands which are temporarily attached to the teeth using special dental adhesive.
- A flexible wire joins all the brackets and allows the teeth to be moved.
- It is not possible for the patient to take the appliance out, which is why it is called a fixed appliance.

What are the alternatives?

- After taking x-rays, making models and taking measurements of your teeth and jaws, your orthodontist may decide that the best and possibly only treatment suitable for you is with Fixed appliances.
- You should be sure you understand what is involved, as once started, it is important you complete the course of treatment to obtain a stable result.
- You may elect to remain as you are and not have any treatment.

How are the appliances fitted?

Sometimes you will be given two appointments to have your appliances fitted. There will be a week between them, this timing is important, so if you cannot keep either of the appointments you will need to rebook them both as they are coordinated appointments.

Appointment 1

- Small rubber separating elastics are placed between your teeth, usually either side of the first molar teeth. These are designed to gently space the teeth to make room for metal bands to be fitted. The separators can sometimes make the back teeth ache for a few days. If painful we suggest you take whatever you normally take for pain relief.
- A cheek retractor is placed in the mouth to keep the lips away from the teeth. Then the teeth are cleaned and dried, suction is used to keep the teeth dry. The brackets are then glued in place. This is a precise procedure, and it is important that you keep still and the area is kept dry. Having the brackets placed is not painful.
- After they have been fitted you will be given advice on the care and maintenance of your appliances by one of our dental nurses. Feel free to ask any questions.

Appointment 2

- The separating elastics will be removed, and metal bands will be tried for size. When the correct bands have been selected, they will be cemented in place around the first molar teeth.
- A flexible wire called an arch wire will be positioned in the brackets and held in place by coloured elastic modules.

What are the potential risks and side effects?

- Appliances may feel strange and a little uncomfortable to begin with. You will be given advice on how to deal with any discomfort when you have the appliances fitted. Teeth are sometimes uncomfortable immediately after adjustment, but this usually settles quite quickly.

- Appliances will not in themselves cause damage to your teeth, but poor cleaning and too many sugary foods and drinks can cause permanent damage. Brackets, wires and braces can trap food and cause more plaque than usual to build up.
- Good oral hygiene is essential, your teeth and appliance will need to be cleaned very thoroughly. You will be given oral hygiene and maintenance advice to keep the appliance clean and in working order, when your appliance is fitted.

What are the expected benefits of treatment?

Orthodontic treatment will straighten the teeth or move them into a better position. Example: “prominent” teeth as upper front teeth can stick out and can look unpleasing; orthodontic treatment may be able correct this. This can not only improve their appearance but also the way the teeth bite together, while also making them easier to clean.

Will I need to have teeth taken out?

You may not have enough room for all your permanent teeth and so it may be necessary to take out some permanent teeth to make space. Your orthodontist will tell you whether this is the case. Sometimes enough space can be created using other forms of treatment.

How long will treatment take?

- The length of treatment depends on several things, for example, how severe the problem is and how cooperative the patient is. The average time wearing fixed appliances is eighteen months.
- When the active phase of treatment is finished, the teeth need to be held in position for a time. This period is called retention and is a very important part of the treatment. The appliances that hold the teeth in place are called retainers.
- Retainers hold newly straightened teeth in position while the tissues around the roots adjust and settle.

Is orthodontic work permanent?

There is a particular risk of relapse in the early months after the brace is removed. Even after retention, it is normal for minor tooth movements to happen throughout life, so no permanent guarantee can be given. However, it is unusual for teeth to alter enough to need further treatment.

How many visits will it take?

Orthodontic appliances usually need adjusting every six to eight weeks. Your orthodontist will tell you how often your appliance will need adjusting. You will be given your next appointment at each visit.

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Sources of information

Consultant Orthodontist, Senior Dental Nurse at Orthodontic Department, –
Eastbourne DGH – Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 771756

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Dr F. Pantanali - Consultant Orthodontist.

Dr A. Ahmad - Consultant Orthodontist

The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:

Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery

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Responsible clinician: Helen Hemsley

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