

INFORMED CONSENT FOR LIMITED ORTHODONTIC CARE

Orthodontics is the specialty of dentistry that uses devices and appliances to move and straighten teeth. Most people are familiar with “braces” on teenagers, but teeth can be moved for many reasons in people of all ages.

Orthodontists often treat all the teeth in an attempt to obtain a perfectly straight smile and bite. This process is usually lengthy and may cost considerably more than limited treatment. **“Limited” treatment means that tooth movements are targeted to a specific problem or region of your mouth.** There may be other problems in your mouth that could benefit from orthodontic treatment, but these may not be addressed as part of your limited treatment. If you wish to have all orthodontic problems corrected, you can be referred to the faculty or graduate orthodontic practice to be screened for full treatment. Limited treatments at the University of Washington are usually completed in six months or less, while full treatment may take two or more years. **Limited orthodontic care does not typically include follow-up retainer checks or replacement retainers. Additional fees may be incurred for extra retainers or additional care.**

Many times, limited orthodontic treatment is aimed at preparing teeth to be restored with crowns, bridges, or implants. The orthodontic appliances may not necessarily make your front teeth straighter or close gaps. **The cost of limited orthodontics is in addition to the fees for these other treatments.**

Like every medical discipline, **having orthodontic treatment is not without risk.** Fortunately, negative side effects of having orthodontic treatment are rare and not usually very severe. Some problems are even less common for people undergoing limited treatment.

It is important that you understand the limitations and risks of treatment to obtain successful orthodontic treatment results. Although infrequent, **these potential risks must be taken into consideration when deciding to undergo orthodontic treatment.**

- Having braces or other orthodontic devices in your mouth can increase the amount of plaque bacteria and food that gets trapped around your teeth. You must take extra care to keep your teeth and gums clean and healthy.
- Poor brushing and flossing may result in puffy, infected gums.
- A diet high in sugar can result in permanent white decalcifications or “enamel scars.” These white spots and progress to tooth decay.
- Hard, crunchy, or sticky food can damage braces orthodontic appliances, causing unwanted movements and delaying treatment.
- Some patients experience some shortening of the tooth roots while their teeth are being moved. This shortening, called “root resorption,” is usually minimal and has no serious consequence. The risk of root resorption is greatly reduced in limited treatment.

- There can be loss of the supporting bone or gum tissue if treated teeth are infected or experiencing active periodontal disease.
- Teeth have the tendency to return to their original positions or “relapse.” Wearing a retainer after treatment can help to reduce this change.
- Occasionally, patients develop discomfort in the muscles of the face or the temporomandibular joints (TMJs).
- Brackets and wires may irritate the inside of your mouth while in treatment. When your appliance is adjusted or “tightened,” you may experience some discomfort or tenderness.
- You may be inadvertently poked with a wire or instrument while your braces are being adjusted. There is a slight risk you may swallow or aspirate one of the small pieces of the appliance.
- Treatment may take longer than originally estimated, especially if success depends on patient cooperation or appointments are missed.
- Because orthodontic treatment moves teeth, your occlusion (“bite”) may change. Most patients adapt easily and comfortably to their new bite.
- Each individual's teeth and bite are unique. Orthodontic treatment may not be able to provide an ideal result for all people. Sometimes, restorative dental treatment (bonding, crowns, bridges, implants, etc.) may be required to optimize results. This may be especially true for people having limited orthodontic treatment. The cost of orthodontic treatment does not include restorative fees.
- Some medications and general medical problems can affect your orthodontic treatment. Please keep your provider informed of any health or medication changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby acknowledge that I understand the major treatment considerations and potential risks of orthodontic treatment. I understand that actual treatment outcomes may vary from expected results.

SIGNATURE

DATE

WITNESS

DATE
