ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT – WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

If you are thinking of having orthodontic treatment, you will need to know about the benefits and risks. You may want to ask some questions before you decide whether to go ahead.

What is orthodontic treatment? Orthodontic treatment usually involves wearing braces. Orthodontic treatment may involve the extraction of teeth, but only when necessary. Your orthodontist will advise you during treatment planning.

What are the possible benefits of orthodontic treatment? There are many benefits of having orthodontic treatment such as:

- Improve appearance of the teeth and face
- Improved health of teeth and gums
- Improved bite, making it easier to eat

What are the possible risks of orthodontic treatment? Patients should finish their orthodontic treatment with healthy teeth and gums. Unfortunately, some patients do experience problems during orthodontic treatment. Your orthodontist will talk to you about the common risks of treatment and about those that might particularly affect you.

MOST PROBLEMS ARE PREVENTABLE IF YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR TEETH AND GUMS

Will I end up with marks on my teeth? Your teeth will be damaged unless you keep them clean and are sensible about what you eat and drink.

MAKE SURE THIS DOESN’T HAPPEN TO YOUR TEETH!

It is important to brush your teeth well a minimum of twice a day, with fluoride toothpaste. If you do not keep your teeth and braces clean, you risk ending up with permanent white or brown marks on your teeth. The picture above shows this. Rinsing with fluoride mouth-wash at bedtime after tooth brushing, will also help to keep your teeth healthy. If you have too many sweets, sugary foods, fruit drinks or fizzy drinks you also risk ending up with marks on your teeth. The more often you have sugary foods or drinks, the more likely you are to damage your teeth, so avoid sweet things between meals.

Will my gums be damaged? Most patients experience a little redness and swelling of the gums whilst wearing a brace. The problem usually disappears once the brace is removed. However, if you do not brush your teeth and brace properly, your gums may become very swollen during treatment, causing lasting damage.
**Does it matter if I have injured my teeth in the past?** Please tell your orthodontist if you have previously knocked or damaged a front tooth. If this has happened to you, then there is a risk that your tooth may need further treatment while you are wearing a brace. One sign of this is that the tooth may become darker over time. If any treatment is needed, this will usually be carried out by your regular dentist.

**Will the roots of my teeth be damaged?** All brace work causes minor changes to the roots of the teeth. This is not usually a problem. Occasionally, changes to the roots can be more serious. It is often possible to tell if someone is at risk, but not always. If you are at particular risk your orthodontist will talk to you about this.

**Will my teeth be painful?** Your teeth are likely to be sore for about 3 - 5 days after the brace is fitted and each time it is adjusted. If necessary, painkillers such as the ones you would normally take for a headache may help. Please follow the instructions on the packet. If your brace rubs your lips or cheek, you can be given a product to help with this. If you are experiencing extreme pain please call 0118 9775121 to get advice from your orthodontist.

**Is there a chance that my treatment won’t be successful?** Your orthodontic treatment should be successful if you are committed to your treatment, look after your teeth and braces well, follow your orthodontist’s instructions and ensure that you attended your regular appointments to have the brace adjusted.

**Will my teeth move after treatment?** You will be asked to wear retainers after active treatment. Retainers are designed to hold the teeth in their new straight position. It is very important that you wear your retainers as instructed. How long you will need to wear them depends on how your teeth originally looked. Your orthodontist will discuss this with you at the end of active treatment.

You can expect your teeth to move a little once you stop wearing retainers. Changes in the position of your teeth can continue throughout life and are a part of the normal ageing process. To maintain the teeth in the position they were in when your braces were removed, it is advised that you wear your retainers once a week on a long term basis.

**Are there any other risks?** There are some rare risks which only affect a few people. If there is a particular risk involved in your treatment, your orthodontist will talk to you about this.

**If you have any more questions that you would like to ask, please write them down and talk to your orthodontist at your next appointment. It is important that you fully understand what is involved in having treatment before you decide to go ahead.**