



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Your First Visit to Orthodontics

You have been invited to come to us for an orthodontic check-up by your dentist. This leaflet covers questions that you may have before you visit us.

① For more information, please contact:

## **Department of Orthodontics**

York Hospital

Phone Number: 01904 725614

Email: [jane.russell9@nhs.net](mailto:jane.russell9@nhs.net)

Scarborough Hospital

Phone Number: 01723 342081

Email: [Bernadette.jackson1@nhs.net](mailto:Bernadette.jackson1@nhs.net)

## What will happen on my first visit?

You will be seen by one of the consultant orthodontists for a checkup. They are dentists who treat people with missing teeth, teeth trapped in the gums or people with issues with jaw growth and facial deformity. They will examine your teeth and jaws and take some measurements. You will probably also need to have some x-rays taken. The consultant will discuss what they find with you and whether or not they recommend braces or any other treatment.

If treatment is needed, then they will advise where it should be carried out. Difficult cases may be treated in the hospital. If you have a less difficult problem, this may be carried out by a specialist in a local orthodontic practice. In this case, we will contact your dentist who can then refer you to the correct service.

It may be that you do not qualify for orthodontic treatment funded by the National Health Service. In this event we will advise you.

## How long will this appointment take?

This first appointment may take up to two or sometimes three hours. How long it takes will depend on whether you need x-rays. It then depends on how busy the x-ray department is.

## Who should I come with?

If you are under the age of 16, you will need to come with a parent or guardian (at least for the first couple of visits). If you are older than 16, parents or guardians are still also welcome to attend but do not have to attend.

## What happens after this first visit if I am going to have braces at the hospital?

After your first visit, you may be booked in to see one of the nurses that run the oral care clinics. They will explain more about what to expect from braces, how to clean them and what foods to avoid to help reduce damage to your teeth. They may take records such as impressions or moulds of your teeth and photographs. These may be taken at your second visit.

## What happens next?

You will then be booked in with the orthodontist who is going to be treating you under the supervision of a consultant orthodontist. They use your records to discuss the plan for your braces in more detail. If you are happy to proceed, you (or your parent / guardian) will be asked to sign the consent form.

A few weeks later your braces will be fitted. This is usually done over two (or sometimes three) appointments.

Sometimes, when treatment is complex, your orthodontist may have to involve someone else to help. Often, this may involve a referral to the maxillo-facial or restorative dentistry teams.

Some patients may be seen in a joint clinic if they could benefit from a combination of orthodontics and a jaw surgery procedure or have multiple missing teeth. Some orthodontists and maxillo-facial surgeons or restorative dentistry clinicians meet together to discuss treatment. This is to ensure that you come away with the best possible treatment.

## How often will I need to attend appointments?

Once the braces have been fitted, you will need to be seen every six to 10 weeks for checks and adjustments. The appointments are all between 0900 and 1600 hours, Monday to Friday. The appointments can be as quick as 15 minutes or as long as one hour depending on what needs to be done. Parents/guardians may be required to attend in some instances if the treatment needs to be discussed.

If your brace is damaged, you may have to contact the department to attend additional appointments at short notice.

Please be on time for your appointments. If you are late, we may not be able to see you. Please note, traffic around the hospital can be very busy. Allow plenty of time to get to the hospital and park.

## How long will I need braces for?

This varies from case to case, but treatment usually takes between 18 and 24 months.

Following this, you will have a retainer fitted which you will need to wear mainly at night. A retainer looks like a thin gum shield which keeps your teeth straight.

Long term retainer wear is advised to guarantee the result of your orthodontic treatment. After you have been discharged from the hospital department, your own dentist can replace these for you. However, there will be a charge for these.

## Will my brace hurt?

Your teeth are likely to be sore for about three to five days after the brace is fitted or adjusted. If necessary, painkillers (such as those you would normally take for headaches) can be taken.

We will give you some wax which you can use to help prevent your brace rubbing your lips or cheeks.

We will advise you on changes to your diet to reduce damage to the brace and to your teeth.

## Please Note

Orthodontic treatment is a big commitment and will cause inconvenience. However, successful treatment can be life changing. Perseverance is worthwhile.

In order for treatment to be successful, you will need to:

- Make some changes to your diet.
- Spend more time cleaning your teeth.
- Attend your appointments on time (which will mean having time off school or work).
- Wear your brace as instructed.

We look forward to seeing you!

## Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please telephone or email the Department of Orthodontics using the contact information at the start of this leaflet.

## Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:  
[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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