

Orthodontic Department

Your First Visit

This leaflet has been written for patients attending the Orthodontic Department for the first time.

Why have I been sent an appointment?

- This is usually because your dentist has noticed a problem with your teeth.
- Problems can include:
 - **Crooked** or overcrowded **teeth**
 - **Sticking out** teeth
 - A problem with your **bite**
 - **Teeth stuck** in the gum
 - **Missing** teeth
 - **Extra** teeth

How do I get to the department?

- When you enter the hospital grounds, follow the signs for **East Wing**
- Enter the hospital through **Entrance 3** of East Wing. This door leads straight into the **Orthodontic Department**.

Site maps are available on our website: www.dchft.nhs.uk



Where can I park?

- Although there is a pay and display car park at Dorset County Hospital, **parking can be very difficult**
- We therefore **suggest** that you try to **use public transport** to get here if possible
- If you do decide to drive, then you should leave yourself **plenty of time to park** and consider using the nearby town car parks.

Further information on parking, including charges, is available on our website above.

What will happen at my first appointment?

- You will be asked to **complete a medical history** form when you arrive
- A member of the team will then **look at your teeth** (similar to having a check-up at the dentist)
- You will probably be asked to visit the **x-ray department** for an x-ray
- You will then see the orthodontist again to **discuss the problems with your teeth** and the options to solve them.

This will take some time, so please allow approximately two hours for your appointment.

Will I automatically be offered a brace?

- There is a national scoring system to identify the people who will benefit most from braces
- If your teeth are not bad enough to be treated at the hospital, then you may choose to leave them as they are, or we will explain to you where else you might receive treatment.

Do I have to wear a brace if offered one?

- We do not force you to wear a brace; the **final choice is yours**
- You should think about whether you are willing to wear a brace before you come to see us
- Braces are a **big commitment**, so we will be able to give you some time to decide whether you can make that commitment after you have talked to the orthodontist.



When will my treatment start?

- Do not expect a brace to be fitted straightaway
- If we are able to provide you with a brace, this will take a **few months to organise**.

What types of braces are there?

- We mainly use **fixed braces** (train tracks)
 - **Small metal squares** (brackets) are glued to the teeth and are connected by a wire
 - **We do not offer cosmetic or tooth-coloured fixed braces**



- Sometimes we use **removable or functional braces**
- These plastic braces can be taken out for cleaning, but must be worn at all other times to work properly

- Occasionally we ask you to wear a **headgear brace**
 - This brace has a head strap that you connect to the fixed or removable brace in the evenings and at night
- These braces do different jobs and, unfortunately, you cannot choose the one you want
- Sometimes more than one type of brace will be necessary
- Your orthodontist will advise you which brace will be needed to fix your teeth or jaws.

Will I need to have teeth removed?

- **Sometimes** teeth need to be removed **to make room to line up your teeth** or to encourage teeth which are stuck in the gum to come through
- Normally the teeth will be removed by your own dentist, with local anaesthetic, just before the braces are fitted.

How long does brace treatment take?

- Usually braces are on for **18 months to two years**
- You will have to come every **six to eight weeks** to have the braces adjusted
- After the fixed braces are removed, you will need to wear a **retainer brace** on a **long-term** basis.

How much will it cost?

- Your braces will be **free**
- However, if you **break** your brace **frequently**, or **lose** your removable brace, you may be **charged for a replacement**.

Are there any risks?

- **There are risks** to wearing a brace which will be fully explained before you agree to have your brace fitted
- Your **teeth can be damaged** if you **do not clean around the brace** properly or you have too **much sugar**
- Because of this, **we will not offer you a brace** if you **cannot clean your teeth well**.

If you lose interest in cleaning your teeth during your treatment, then we may remove your brace early.

What are my responsibilities?

- **Cleaning**
 - As mentioned above, you will have to make sure that the teeth and the brace are cleaned well (after every meal)
- **Watching what you eat**
 - You will have to cut down on sugary drinks and snacks. Examples of foods that you will have to give up are toffees and chewing gum
- **Attending appointments**
 - You must let us know as early as possible if you cannot attend your appointment. This way we can give your slot to someone else. If you frequently miss or change appointments, your treatment will take longer or may not be completed.
- **Wearing your brace**
 - It is essential to wear the brace as instructed for the treatment to be effective. If you are asked to wear a headgear brace, or elastics with your fixed brace, then you **must** wear them for the correct number of hours.



Are the results permanent?

- **Teeth** do tend to **move slightly throughout life**, so eventually they may become slightly crooked again
- To minimise this, we ask you to wear **retainers at night time long-term**
- If you stop wearing them, the teeth are likely to move.



Will I still have to visit my own dentist?

- **Yes**; you will still have to see your dentist for routine check-ups.

Where can I find out more information?

- More information is available on our website: www.dchft.nhs.uk
- You can ask the orthodontist any questions you still have.

What happens if I miss my appointment?

- You will **not be sent another appointment** and we will write to your dentist to tell them that you did not attend
- You should **contact your dentist** to ask for another referral to be sent
- To avoid this, please let us know if you cannot attend your appointment. Another patient may be able to use your slot and we may be able to reschedule your appointment.

Further information



Follow us

- On Instagram



Contact Numbers:

We hope you have found this information useful but if you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

Orthodontic Department: 01305 255174

About this leaflet:

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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