

Orthodontics

POTENTIAL RISKS AND LIMITATIONS OF ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

To our patients,

As a rule, excellent orthodontic results can be achieved with informed and cooperative patients. Thus, the following information is routinely supplied to anyone considering orthodontic treatment in our office. While recognizing the benefits of a pleasing smile and healthy teeth, you should also be aware that orthodontic treatment, like any treatment of the body, has some inherent risks and limitations. These are seldom enough to contraindicate treatment but should be considered in making the decision to wear orthodontic appliances. Please feel free to ask any questions about this at the pretreatment consultation.

Decalcification (permanent markings), decay, or gum disease can occur if patients do not brush their teeth properly and thoroughly during the treatment period. Excellent oral hygiene and plaque removal is a must. Sugars and between meal snacks should be eliminated. Regular dental visits should be maintained.

Teeth have a tendency to rebound to their original position after orthodontic treatment. This is called relapse. Very severe problems have a tendency to relapse and the most common area for relapse is the lower front teeth. After removal of the braces, retainers are placed to minimize relapse. Full cooperation in wearing these appliances is vital. We will make our correction to the highest standards and in some cases overcorrect in order to accommodate the rebound tendencies. When retention is discontinued some relapse is still possible.

A nonvital or dead tooth is a possibility. A tooth that has been traumatized from a deep filling or even a minor blow can die over a long period of time with or without orthodontic treatment. An undetected nonvital tooth may flare up during orthodontic movement, requiring endodontic (root canal) treatment to maintain it. Under healthy circumstances the shortened roots are no disadvantage. However, in the event of gum disease in later life the root resorption could reduce the longevity of affected teeth. It should be noted that not all root resorption arises from orthodontic treatment. Trauma, cuts, impaction, endocrine disorders, or idiopathic reasons can also cause root resorption.

There is also a risk that problems may occur in the temporomandibular joints (TMJ). Although this is rare, it is a possibility. Tooth alignment or bite correction can improve tooth-related causes of TMJ pain but not in all cases. Tension appears to play a role in the frequency and severity of joint pains.

Occasionally a person who has grown normally and in average proportions may not continue to do so. If growth becomes disproportionate, the jaw relation can be affected and original treatment objectives may have to be compromised. Skeletal growth disharmony is a biological process beyond the orthodontist's control.

The total time for treatment can be delayed beyond our estimate. Lack of facial growth, poor elastic wear, lack of cooperation, broken appliances and missed appointments are all important factors which could lengthen treatment time and affect the quality of the result.

So please, let's make every effort to do it right. This takes cooperation from everyone - the doctors, the staff, your family, and, most of all, the patient.

We are thanking you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

I have read and reviewed the above discussion of the potential risks of orthodontic treatment. If I did not understand any of the risks described, I will discuss my questions with the doctor prior to beginning orthodontic treatment.

DATE

SIGNATURE