

### How long will treatment take?

Simple straightening can sometimes be carried out in less than 12 months, however more difficult problems can take longer. A short course of treatment can give limited changes. Retainers must be worn to hold the teeth once the braces are finished in order to stop the teeth moving back.

### Will it be painful?

Your teeth are likely to be sore for about 3 - 5 days each time the brace is adjusted. If necessary, simple painkillers can be taken to help - please read the instructions on the packet. If the brace rubs your lips or cheeks, you can use some orthodontic relief wax to help with this. Your orthodontist can give you further advice. Protective shields, to be worn at night, can be supplied with lingual braces to help protect the tongue.

### How often will I need an appointment?

Once the brace has been fitted, you will need regular appointments for it to be adjusted.

### Do I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. It will be important that you still have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment so that your teeth can be checked for tooth decay and gum disease.

### Will I need to wear another brace once treatment has finished?

You will need to wear a retainer once your brace treatment finishes. Retainers are fixed (glued onto the back of your front teeth) and/or removable. Your orthodontist will advise you what will work best for you.

### How long will I need to wear the retainer?

You will be advised to wear your retainer regularly for as long as you wish your teeth to remain straight. Changes in the position of your teeth can continue throughout life and are part of the normal ageing process.

### The only way to have permanently straight teeth is to wear a retainer on a part-time basis for life.

### How much will it cost?

This depends on the difficulty of your case and the type of brace used.

#### REMEMBER

- **You can have braces at any age.**
- **Your teeth and gums need to be healthy before orthodontic treatment is started and need to be maintained in a healthy state throughout treatment.**
- **Some complex problems in adults cannot be treated with braces alone.**
- **A variety of brace types are available.**

Further information:-

NHS choices orthodontics  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/orthodontics](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/orthodontics)

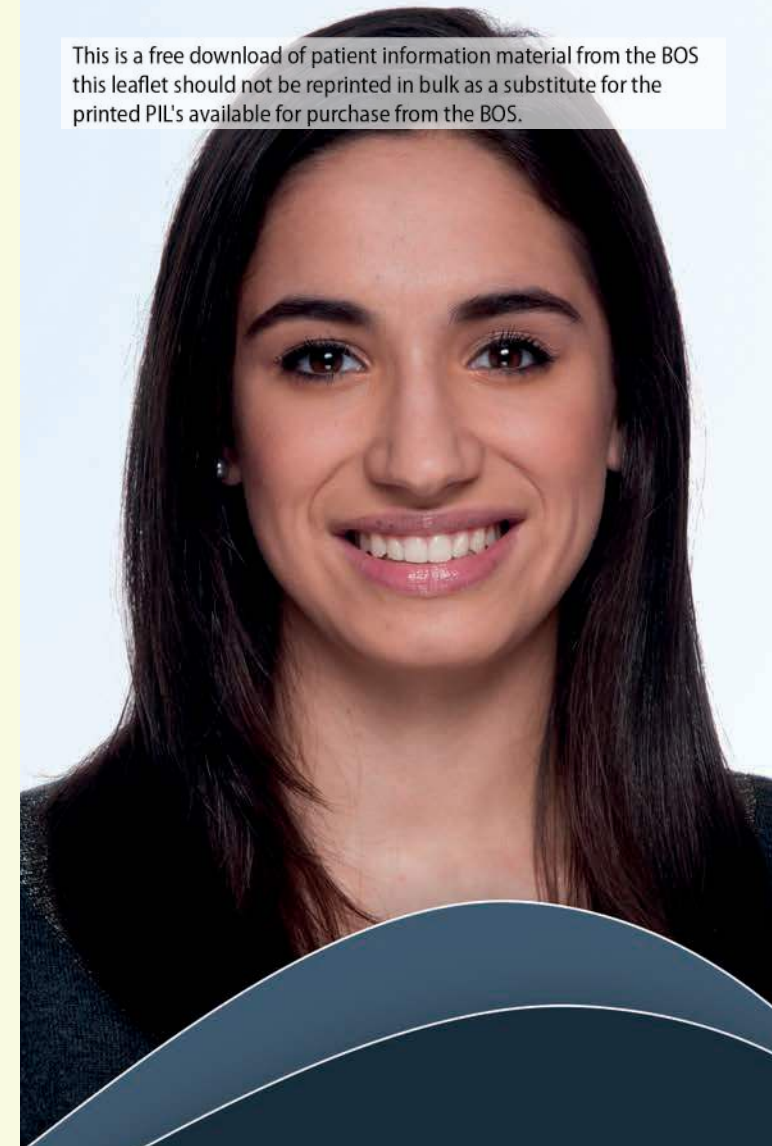
British Lingual Orthodontic Society  
[www.blos.co.uk](http://www.blos.co.uk)

For more information about orthodontics, please visit: [www.bos.org.uk](http://www.bos.org.uk)



This leaflet has been produced with guidance from the Plain English Campaign and British Dyslexia Association to make it easier for you to read

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Patient Information Leaflet

## ADULT ORTHODONTICS

**BOS**  
BRITISH ORTHODONTIC SOCIETY

Registered Charity No 1073464 [www.bos.org.uk](http://www.bos.org.uk)

If you are thinking about having **orthodontic treatment** as an adult you might have some questions you would like to ask your orthodontist.

### **What might I gain from orthodontic treatment?**

The benefits of orthodontic treatment can include the following:

- Improving your appearance, including your smile.
- Correction of dental crowding and straightening of your teeth.
- Correction of your bite so the front and back teeth meet together evenly on closing.
- To aid other dental treatment.

Age is not a limiting factor although the types of treatment may be different in adults.

Where teeth have not developed or are missing, braces can be used to close gaps between the teeth or create space for false teeth to be placed. One of the following may then be fitted if space is created:

- Dental bridge (resin bonded bridge) - a false tooth glued onto another tooth.
- Dental implant - a false tooth on a titanium screw put into the jaw bone.

### **How visible are the braces?**

Fixed braces are available in tooth coloured varieties that blend in with the natural colour of teeth. The wires used to straighten teeth can also be coated with a tooth coloured material to make them less visible. Some tooth coloured braces are not placed on the bottom teeth as they can cause wear to the top teeth.



*Tooth coloured brace*

It is also possible to have braces glued to the back of your teeth (lingual braces). These are much less visible but can be more noticeable to the tongue and cause changes to speech initially.



*Lingual brace*

Aligners are clear, removable 'mouthguards' which fit closely over teeth. A series of aligners is used to straighten teeth. They are worn day and night to achieve the best outcome but should be removed to eat and drink. They are often used with tooth-coloured/ metal attachments fixed to the teeth.



*Aligner*

### **Is it always possible to have braces as an adult?**

Yes, however, certain problems in adults cannot be corrected with braces alone and may require a combination of jaw surgery and orthodontics.

If you have tooth decay or gum disease, it is very important to treat this before braces are fitted.

### **Will I need teeth removed?**

If space is needed to straighten teeth or correct the bite, teeth may need to be removed. In certain situations teeth can be narrowed down in width (interproximal reduction). A detailed assessment with planning is always needed.