

When Treatment Calls For A Specialized Partnership:

Orthodontics And Surgery



American Association of **Orthodontists**

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About the AAO:

Founded in 1900, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) has more than 15,500 members. Active AAO members limit their practices to the dental specialty of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics. Orthodontists are dental specialists with at least two years of advanced orthodontic education after dental school.

The purposes of the American Association of Orthodontists and its member orthodontists are:

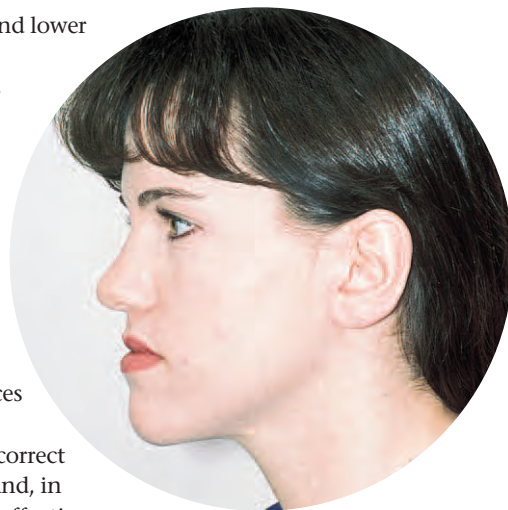
to advance the art and science of orthodontics;

to encourage and sponsor research;

to strive for and maintain the highest standards of excellence in orthodontic education and practice;

and to make significant contributions to the health of the public.

The upper and lower jaws are the foundations by which teeth are supported. Sometimes, when the jaws are too short or long, too wide or narrow, braces alone can't completely correct a bad bite. And, in addition to affecting a person's appearance, an improper bite can lead to serious problems, such as abnormal tooth wear, periodontal disease, and possible joint pain.



Orthodontists correct crooked teeth and bad bites. For problems related to jaw formation and misalignment (skeletal problems), an oral surgeon may be needed. When both conditions come into play, it's common for an orthodontist and oral surgeon to work together.

Some severe cases can only be corrected with a combination of orthodontics and surgery. The orthodontist, working with the oral surgeon, designs a combined treatment plan. Depending on the problem, treatment by other dental specialists may also be required.

This teamwork between the orthodontist, the family dentist and other dental specialists provides better dental health for thousands of patients who are rewarded with straight teeth, bright smiles and facial symmetry – a beautiful combination of shape, form, position and function.

What Problems Do Orthodontics And Surgery Best Correct?

There are many types of jaw development and alignment problems. Some are inherited, some are growth problems, and some are caused by an accident or other trauma.

The most commonly corrected problems include:



- a protruding upper or lower jaw (one that sticks out too far)



- a retruding chin (one that is too far back)



- an unsightly display of gum tissue above the upper front teeth



- an inability to achieve lip contact when the lips are relaxed



- an elongated face

- asymmetry (facial imbalance)



- cleft palate (in young children)



It May Take More Than Braces To Deliver A Proper Bite.



Which Comes First?

Most orthodontic patients undergo an initial period of orthodontic treatment to align the teeth so they will fit properly after surgery is performed. Your orthodontist and oral surgeon will schedule surgery after the teeth have been properly aligned.

Usually, braces or other orthodontic devices used to align teeth before surgery are left in place during the surgical procedure to help stabilize the teeth and jaws. After surgery there is usually an additional period of orthodontic treatment to bring teeth into their final, desired positions, complementing the new facial symmetry.

The Rewards Of Treatment.

While the prospect of undergoing surgery as part of your overall treatment plan may seem daunting, it really is not uncommon. The rewards for such treatment can be very dramatic. Following completion of orthodontic treatment and surgery, you'll enjoy better dental health and have a better facial appearance. Best of all, you'll have a more beautiful smile that reflects a healthier, happier you for the rest of your life.

Cheryl's Story: A Case History.

Cheryl had an underdeveloped lower jaw, crooked teeth and severe overbite that caused her physical discomfort and emotional setbacks for most of her adult life. Finally, in her 40s, after seeing her picture in a local newspaper, she decided to take action.



Before



After

The Rewards For Treatment Can Be Very Dramatic.

After orthodontic treatment combined with surgery to correct her receding jaw, she says it was definitely worth it. "It makes you feel so much better. I now feel more sure of myself about things. I don't think I'm as shy anymore."

It's Important To Choose An Orthodontist.

An orthodontist is a specialist in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of dental and facial irregularities. All orthodontists are dentists, but only about six percent of dentists are orthodontists. Admission to orthodontic programs is extremely competitive and selective.

It takes many years to become an orthodontist and the educational requirements are demanding.

An orthodontist must complete college requirements before starting a three- to five-year graduate program at a dental school accredited by the American Dental Association (ADA).

After dental school, at least two or three academic years of advanced specialty education in an ADA-accredited orthodontic program are required to be an



orthodontist. The program includes advanced education in biomedical, behavioral and basic sciences. The orthodontic student learns the complex skills required to manage tooth movement (orthodontics) and guide facial development (dentofacial orthopedics).

Only dentists who have successfully completed these advanced specialty education programs may call themselves orthodontists.

To Find An Orthodontist Near You:

When you're looking for an orthodontist, remember: all active members of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) are uniquely qualified specialists. Each has met the exacting standards of education and experience required to be an orthodontist by the American Dental Association and by the American Association of Orthodontists for membership.

To find an orthodontist in your area, ask your family dentist. Additionally, the American Association of Orthodontists will be happy to assist you in finding a member orthodontist in your area. Please contact the American Association of Orthodontists by calling 1-800-STRAIGHT or by visiting our Web site at www.braces.org. You may also use these telephone and online services to find orthodontists in a given city/state/province or in a specific ZIP or postal code.

Partnership: You, Your Orthodontist and Your Dentist.

Achieving healthy, beautiful smiles is a team effort that involves the orthodontist, the family dentist, the patient (and the parents, if the patient is young) and, as needed, other dental specialists. The orthodontist provides the expertise, the treatment plan and the techniques to straighten teeth and align the jaws. The family dentist helps make sure that teeth and gums stay clean and healthy. *The patient must cooperate by following the dentist's and the orthodontist's instructions carefully so that the teeth and jaws move in the way desired and on the prescribed schedule.*

Because dental hygiene is so important, regular visits to the family dentist must continue every six months during orthodontic treatment (or more often, if recommended). It is essential that the patient avoid food which may damage orthodontic appliances. The patient must also maintain a healthy, nutritional diet to achieve the best possible results from treatment. A good diet provides essential nutrients to bones and tissues undergoing change during orthodontic treatment.



For a Smile that's Good for Life:

- Follow the American Dental Association's recommendation and start dental visits by your child's first birthday.
- Make regular visits to your dentist at least every six months.
- Take your child for an orthodontic check-up no later than age 7. If a problem is detected, your orthodontist can determine the best time to start treatment.
- Get your child an orthodontic check-up even if he or she is past age 7. Although an early check-up can be extremely beneficial, the fact is that most orthodontic patients begin active treatment between ages 9 and 14.
- Keep in mind that orthodontic treatment can also benefit adults. Less visible, more comfortable braces make treatment more appealing than ever, and healthy teeth, bones and gums of almost any age respond well to treatment.
- Choose an orthodontist – the dental specialist who is uniquely qualified to treat orthodontic problems.
- Take advantage of the affordability of orthodontic treatment today. Most orthodontists have a variety of convenient payment plans.
- Remember that successful orthodontic treatment is the result of a partnership. The orthodontist, family dentist and, *especially*, a cooperative patient all work together to create a healthy, beautiful smile that's good for life.

*The members of the American Association
of Orthodontists wish you and your family
good dental health.*

*For information on orthodontics, visit the
American Association of Orthodontists' Web site
at www.braces.org.*

