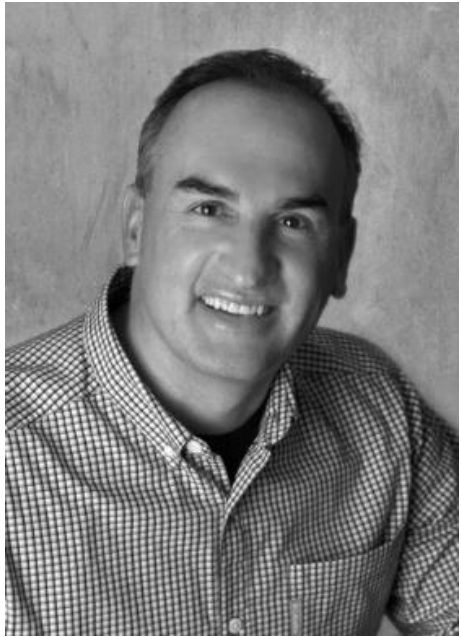


The Orthodontic Process



When considering orthodontic treatment for yourself or a family member, a number of questions may arise regarding the process of the treatment prescribed. Many parents may have experienced orthodontic treatment in their teenage years and have a good idea

of how the actual treatment process works. However, as a parent and especially if you have never visited an orthodontic office before, other questions related to the timing of treatment, insurance, and scheduling frequency may come up.

The orthodontic treatment process can be broken down according to the different types of appointments: • Initial consultation • Diagnostic records • Treatment consultation • Initial placement of orthodontic appliances • Adjustment appointments • Retention appointments

Initial consultation: Whether referred by a general dentist or on your own initiative, the first step is the initial consultation. During this visit, the orthodontist will assess the patient and document his or her findings. Factors such as patient age, timing of tooth eruption, amount of skeletal growth, and severity of the problem can influence the orthodontist's decision as to when to start

treatment. Your orthodontist may also recommend a panoramic x-ray at this appointment. This x-ray gives a full view of the teeth and jaws and can reveal any problems not detected during the clinical exam. If orthodontic treatment is indicated, the orthodontist may be able to give a brief tentative treatment recommendation based on these findings and recommend further evaluation. An estimated treatment fee may also be discussed. This would be a good time to evaluate orthodontic insurance coverage. Most offices can provide



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information related to insurance coverage and your benefits. Contacting your insurance carrier to confirm your individual benefits is recommended.



Diagnostic records: Further orthodontic evaluation involves the scientific evaluation of certain diagnostic criteria or diagnostic records. Typically, these include a panoramic x-ray (full arch x-ray), cephalometric x-ray (facial side view), diagnostic casts (molds of the teeth), and diagnostic photographs of the face and teeth. Your orthodontist will evaluate these records and formulate a definitive treatment plan. It is sometimes possible at this appointment to confirm the initial treatment assessment, and treatment commences at the next appointment. However, some cases may require more-thorough evaluation, and a treatment consultation will be scheduled to discuss the findings of the diagnostic records.

Treatment consultation: After a thorough evaluation of the diagnostic records, the orthodontist will formulate a definitive treatment plan for you. This plan will describe the appropriate orthodontic appliance or appliances, with an estimated treatment time. It will also discuss the importance of patient compliance in relation to completing treatment in the estimated time and preserving the health of the dental and surrounding tissues. This appointment should also include retention recommendations and the timing of the post-treatment retention phase. A definitive treatment fee will also be discussed with a review of the estimated insurance coverage.

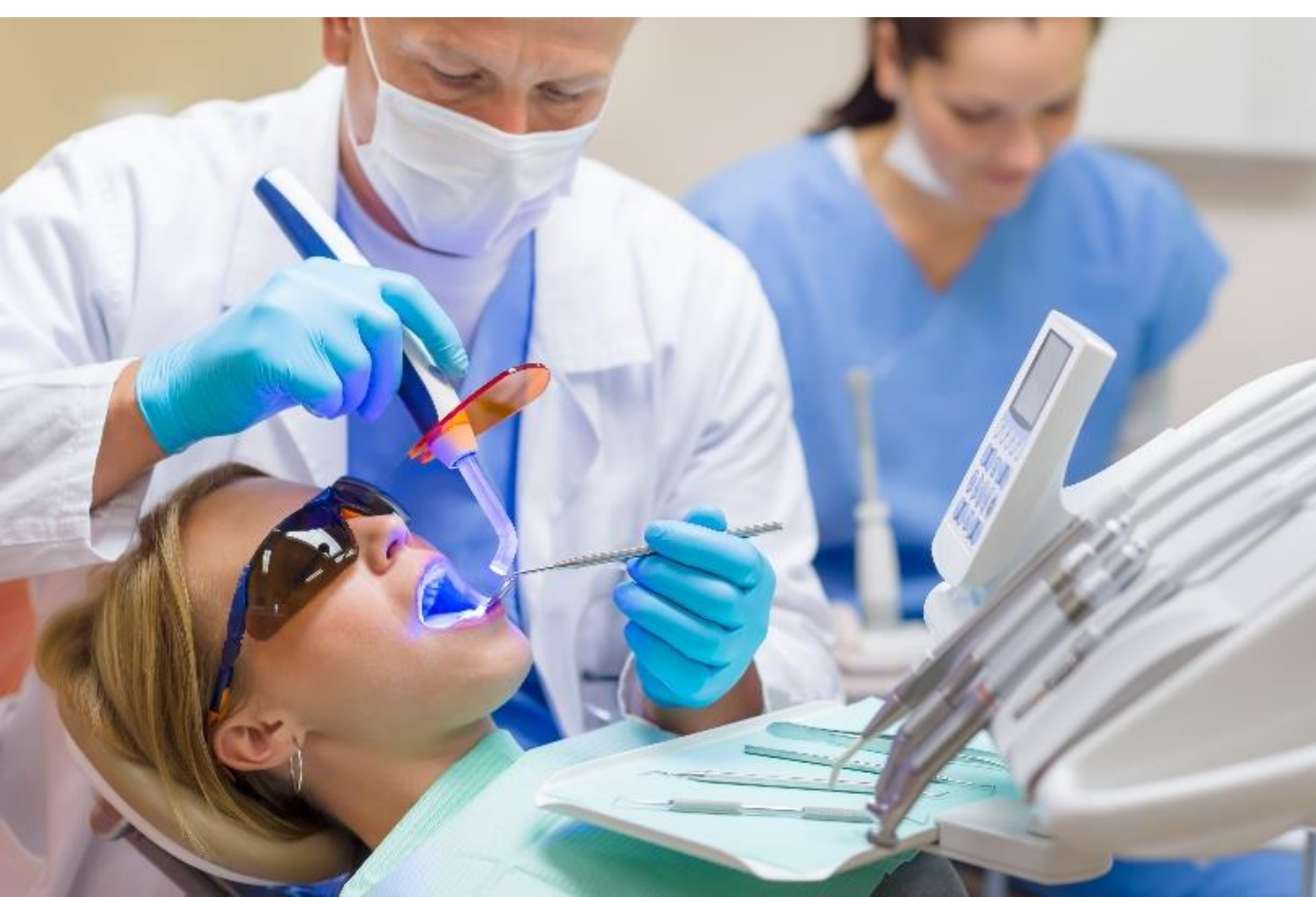
Orthodontic coverage can differ from company to company and also vary with the different plans of an individual company. If you prefer, a predetermination of benefits can be submitted to your insurance carrier.





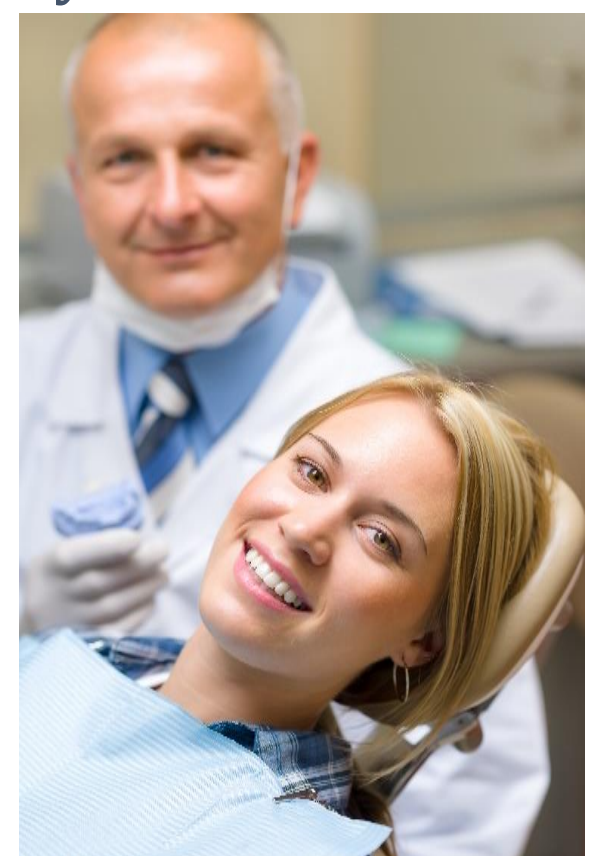
This information will provide an exact amount of your insurance coverage. Payment options for the patient's responsibility will also be discussed. Some offices may require an initial payment of approximately 25% of the treatment fee, with the remainder divided over the course of the treatment. Other options may include full payment with a discount or third-party finance programs. The office administrator will be glad to discuss the option that best suits your individual needs.

The next step is to schedule the initiation of orthodontic treatment.



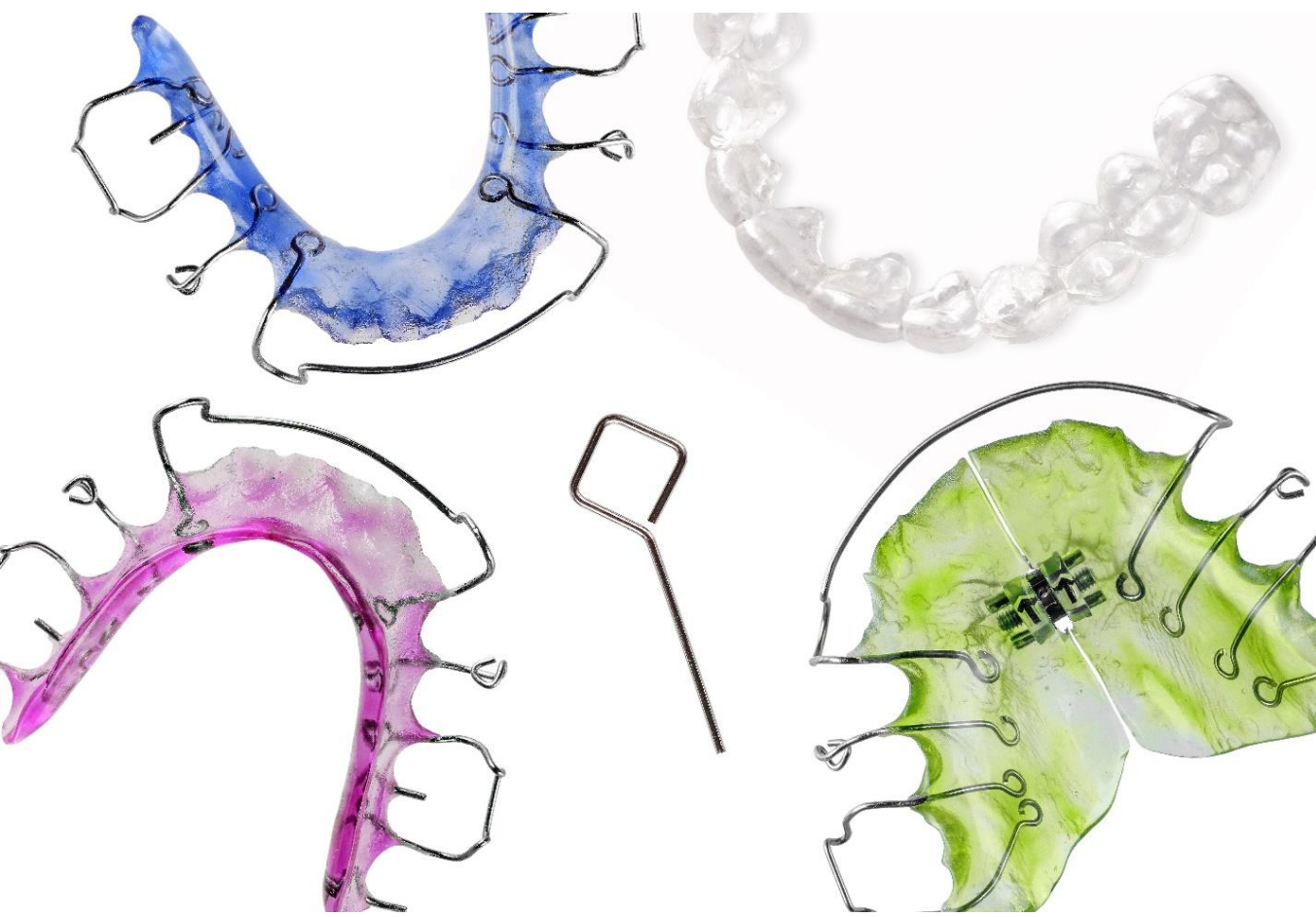
Initial placement of orthodontic appliances: This appointment is usually the longest of all the orthodontic appointments regardless of the type of orthodontic appliance used. Early-phase treatment recommendations may require several appointments over a few weeks to fit for appliances such as expanders or space maintainers. Since the majority of orthodontic

patients are children, most orthodontic offices schedule their long appointments during the early hours of the day to free up available chairs during the after-school hours. This enables the office to see more patients during the after-school hours and minimize patients missing school for shorter appointments. Check with your orthodontic office for its appointmentscheduling policy.



Adjustment appointments: At these appointments, the orthodontist changes or adjusts the wires or aligners to achieve the desired result. They are usually scheduled every 4 to 12 weeks. Several advances in brace and wire

technology allow for fewer appointments to achieve the final result. Progress photographs and x-rays may be taken during this phase of treatment to assist treatment adjustments.



Retention appointments: Once orthodontic treatment is completed and retainers are fitted, patients are usually seen for a period of time to check and adjust retainers. These appointments can be scheduled several months apart. The orthodontist will also monitor wisdom tooth development and eruption and check stability of the teeth in their new position. Post-

treatment xrays and photos are usually recommended shortly after treatment is completed. Early-phase treatment retention will continue until all or most of the permanent teeth have erupted. At this time, a re-evaluation may be recommended if a second phase of treatment is indicated.

Once the above-mentioned factors are no longer a threat to orthodontic relapse and the current retention method is effective, patients can be dismissed from the practice.

The orthodontic treatment process involves several stages that can take several years to complete. This commitment will result in a healthy beautiful smile that can last a lifetime.



For more information for your families orthodontic needs or to find an orthodontist in your area visit the web site of the American Association of Orthodontist at www.braces.org