

Quest for a straight smile



During the past decade, the field of orthodontics has made significant advancements in the way we straighten teeth. Increased dental health awareness through organizations such as the American Dental Association and American Association of Orthodontics, has

motivated more people to search for different ways for a straighter smile.

A technological revolution has evolved using more concealed and faster forms of orthodontic treatment. Products such as Invisalign, self ligating bracket systems with super elastic nickel titanium wires and computer aided technology have enhanced the orthodontic experience for patients of all ages. New materials and techniques have been developed that can make braces less noticeable, improve patient comfort and in some cases reduce treatment time.

If you are considering orthodontic related treatment, for yourself or a family member, I would recommend discussing your concerns initially with your general dentist. They can make treatment recommendations based on your individual needs and if necessary, can recommend an orthodontic specialist to treat or correct the existing condition.

It is important to realize that some orthodontic related problems may be multifactorial and may require assistance from other dental specialties. Working in conjunction with a dentist, the specialist can address your cosmetic and dental needs to achieve a beautiful smile.

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Today people have many choices or options to straighten their teeth. Of course there is the typical or traditional method of straightening teeth with metal bracket systems. However, today people are looking for more concealed orthodontic solutions. Ceramic or tooth colored brackets are an option when it comes to orthodontic treatment in a traditional sense. Just like traditional braces, ceramic braces are attached to the facial surface of teeth (front of the teeth) and are just as effective as traditional metal bracket systems. Although less noticeable, they are still visible to the public and can be a cosmetic concern with slight discolorations and increased discomfort due to the size of the brackets. Lingual bracket systems are an option when it comes to concealed orthodontic solutions. Brackets are placed behind the teeth and are used just like facial bracket systems in which a bracket is bonded onto a tooth and a wire is placed into the bracket to produce the desired pressure to move teeth. However, lingual braces are more difficult for the orthodontist to work with and are usually more expensive than brackets systems placed on the front of the tooth. Also the discomfort level is much greater with these brackets systems being directly against the tongue and speech problems occur until the tongue can adjust to the change in surface area of the teeth. Other concerns for the orthodontist are the potential of adverse contact of the brackets with the lower teeth and therefore a transient change in an individual's bite may be required during the process. Therefore, many orthodontists prefer not to provide lingual bracket system options.



Clear aligner systems such as Invisalign and Invisalign Teen have become a very popular option in both the adult and teen population for their orthodontic needs. Invisalign is a removable system that uses a series of custom-molded aligners to move your teeth. These systems have become much more predictable in the tooth movement process and are usually comparable in price as typical orthodontic treatment with braces. These aligners are removable and

therefore patient responsibility is a must for successful treatment outcomes.

However, if you only have one or a few teeth that need to be straightened or have a few teeth that shifted after full orthodontic treatment, these options may not be as desirable and may prevent you from pursuing treatment. There are limited treatment options one may consider.

Dentists can also close gaps and straighten teeth by changing the surface shape of teeth via crowns or veneers. Although this process can be very effective and take less time, it may require shaving down a significant amount of natural tooth structure during the process. However, this may be an excellent option in cases where the teeth are discolored or have uneven wear from attrition over the years.



One may consider limited treatment with braces for a short period of time to correct minor alignment problems. Invisalign® has a product called Express. Invisalign® Express is an orthodontic treatment designed to correct mild orthodontic problems such as minor crowding and spacing. Since it is designed for mild problems only, treatment time is generally less than six months and may be more cost effective compared to full treatment options. I have developed a procedure called **lingualWirealign®** which has been very successful treating these minor alignment problems. The technique utilizes small super-elastic nickel titanium wires placed behind the teeth to produce the desired tooth movement. Because the wires are small and placed in close proximity to the teeth, it overcomes the restrictions of lingual bracket systems when it comes to speech and discomfort. Patients see significant results in a short period of time and like that these wires not visible.

In recent years orthodontic treatment for adults has become more common. This trend is probably true due to an increase of awareness of the above mentioned products and techniques. If you have always considered improving your smile, talk to your dental professional to discuss options that now are available.

For more information on our Orthodontic services, please visit our web site at www.drcassalia.com or call 215.822.6320 Chalfont office or 610.847.5933 Ottsville office