



BRACE YOURSELF

Having straight teeth is more than just for pretty smiles

CROOKED TEETH is associated with many problems. They affect our speech, chewing and appearance, cause uneven wear of teeth, and make oral hygiene a challenge. Crowded teeth are more difficult to brush, leaving gums prone to disease and teeth prone to staining and decay. So it is important to have our teeth and jaw properly aligned.

Early treatment in children helps guide the growth of the jaw and prevent malocclusion (bad bite) from developing. Today, adults are also straightening their teeth to boost their confidence. Braces are included as part of the treatment in restoring their missing teeth with dental implants and other dental prostheses.

What are the options available?

- **Orthodontic braces** or dental

braces are still the most popular choice for straightening teeth. The treatment period is 18 to 24 months, and a retention period is required after the removal of braces to keep the teeth straight. There is no age limit for orthodontic treatment.

- **Ceramic brackets, lingual brackets** (behind the teeth) and **invisible braces** (also known as clear aligners) are aesthetic and less visible options for those who do not want to be seen with traditional metal braces throughout the course of treatment. All patients who are eligible for orthodontic treatment can opt for any of these aesthetic options. Depending on the complexity of the malocclusion, most of these systems are just as effective in moving the teeth, and

the treatment period usually do not take longer than traditional braces.

- **Dental veneers and crowns** provide a faster alternative to straightening teeth. However, this option does not straighten the whole tooth (crown and root). It only masks the portion of the crown that is visible in the mouth, making it to appear straight. The straightening effect is achieved by trimming the crooked teeth, allowing veneers or crowns with the correct shape and alignment to be placed over them. Patients can choose the shade and colour of these veneers or crowns. The treatment process takes just weeks to complete. However, depending on the severity and number of crooked teeth involved, this option can be destructive due to the amount of tooth structure removed.

Which option is for me?

Every individual is unique, and the risks and benefits of each option need to be considered carefully. Thomson Specialist Dentistry offers a Pre-straightening Dental Screening, where an orthodontist will assess your condition and needs before recommending a treatment plan for you. ◉



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