



The BOS Guide

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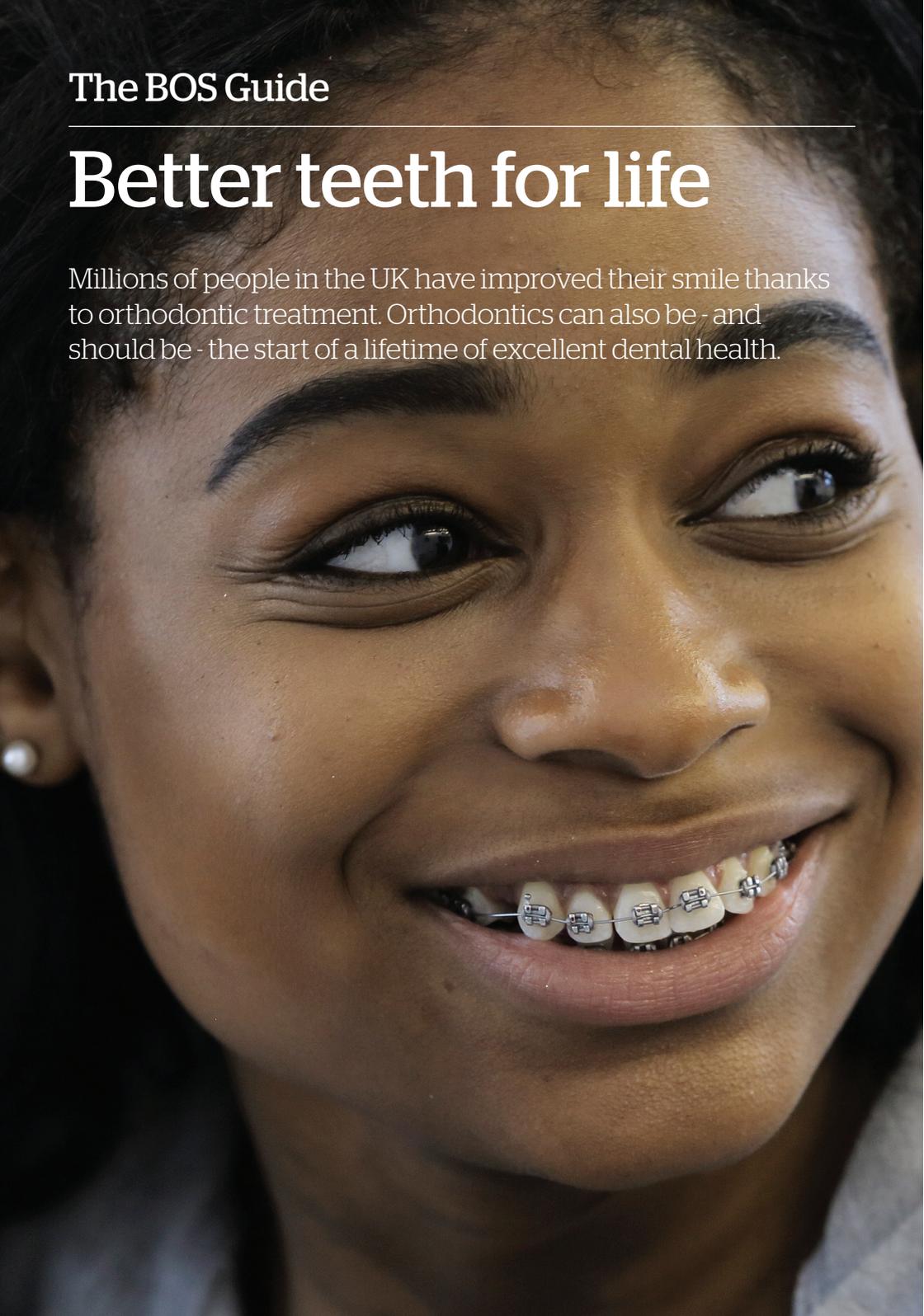
# Better teeth for life

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# Better teeth for life

Millions of people in the UK have improved their smile thanks to orthodontic treatment. Orthodontics can also be - and should be - the start of a lifetime of excellent dental health.



## Did you know?

### Orthodontic need



- The most recent UK Child Dental Health Survey found that 58% of 12 year-olds were often embarrassed to smile or laugh because of their teeth or had difficulty eating or cleaning them

### Eligibility for orthodontic treatment

- Approximately one third of young people are eligible for orthodontic treatment according to NHS criteria - and most of those who qualify for treatment want it



### The orthodontic need app

- The British Orthodontic Society has created an app to help dentists work out whether their young patients are eligible for NHS funded treatment

### Age of treatment

- The best age to start treatment is usually between 10 and 14 years but if you have concerns talk to your dentist



### Quality of life

- People with no dental problems or only minor dental problems have a better quality of life in relation to emotional and social well-being

# The impact of treatment

Patients in braces are encouraged to keep their mouths really clean and there is evidence that once treatment has been completed, patients continue to look after their teeth well. It is important to realise that teeth are liable to drift back towards their starting point after orthodontic treatment. The only way to make sure this does not happen is for patients to wear the retainers given at the end of treatment.



## **The benefits of treatment in summary are:**

- A better smile gives improved self-confidence
- Life chances can be improved
- Better long term dental health may well result from the good habits built up during orthodontic treatment
- The ability to chew can be improved in some cases
- Reducing the prominence of upper front teeth may make them less likely to be knocked or damaged
- Young people with prominent teeth may be vulnerable to teasing - orthodontic treatment can help

**The day the braces came off was a day that Joel and his mother won't forget. The boy looking back in the mirror was unrecognisable. Joel asked his mother what the lines were around his eyes and when she said they were smile lines, he replied:**

**"That's probably why I've not noticed them before because I never used to smile."**

## **By the end of treatment, you should:**

- 1)** Have teeth which are straighter and an improved smile
- 2)** Have a better bite and teeth may be easier to keep clean
- 3)** Understand how important your dental hygiene routine is and maintain it - for ever
- 4)** Understand that wearing your retainers is essential throughout life to stop your teeth returning to their original position

**If all the above applies, your orthodontic treatment should be a life-enhancing experience!**

**"I have found the whole treatment has made me a much more comfortable person and I am no longer afraid of the way that I look."**



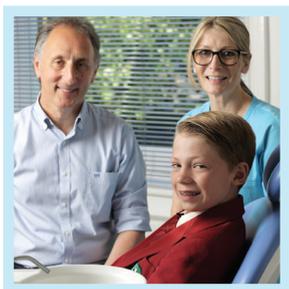


## Your role in achieving better teeth for life

Successful orthodontic treatment relies heavily on a partnership between you, your orthodontic practice and your dentist. All have a part to play in getting a great result.

## Before treatment - some things you need to be aware of:

- Once you have started treatment, you will need to see the orthodontist regularly until it's finished
- You will need to take care of your teeth and braces
- Attending appointments regularly, even when in school time, is important
- You may be required to wear elastics or other orthodontic appliances



- Having brackets and wires in the mouth makes it much more difficult to keep your teeth clean. If you are not looking after your teeth well, it may not be in your own best interests to have braces
- Repeated breakages of your brace may limit progress and your treatment may have to be abandoned before it is finished
- You will still need to see your dentist for regular check-ups during your brace treatment

## Starting treatment - what you need to do

Once your braces are on, you will have to be super vigilant with your dental hygiene! This means you should:

- Take extra care when you brush your teeth and remember to brush thoroughly for at least two minutes in the morning and evening, and also to brush after meals to clean off food debris
- Always use a fluoride toothpaste. Clean your teeth with small circular brushing movements and brush carefully around your brace
- Chew a disclosing tablet sometimes after brushing to show the areas of your teeth that need more attention
- Use small inter-dental brushes or the special floss for brace-wearers to help remove plaque from between the teeth
- An alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash can also be used during the day when brushing isn't possible
- Avoid sweet snacks and sugary drinks between meals
- Enjoy a healthy diet with plenty of sugar-free foods, but avoid hard and crunchy foods which might damage the brackets

The British Orthodontic Society has an extensive range of patient information leaflets as well as FAQs:  
[www.bos.org.uk](http://www.bos.org.uk)

With thanks to the staff and patients of the Specialist Orthodontic Practice, Epping, for allowing us to use their photographs and to winners of the **BOS Against the Odds award** for selected extracts from their entries.



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