

ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT OPTIONS

The goal of any orthodontic treatment is straight teeth, proper bite and function, and improved appearance. However, be advised that there is no longer just one treatment philosophy! It is important for you to know the differences that now exist before agreeing to treatment. Choosing a dentist should be based primarily on which treatment philosophy seems most appropriate, and secondarily on cost and office location. Don't hesitate to talk about your concerns and your desire to know all the options the dentist is willing to utilize. In the past, orthodontic treatment was rendered only by specialists (orthodontists), but today many general dentists are providing orthodontic treatment as well. Generally, the differences in orthodontic treatment philosophy revolve around:

1. **Removing teeth** - With the traditional approach, up to 4 permanent bicuspid are extracted to gain space for the crooked teeth. With the alternative approach, teeth are seldom removed, and if recommended, might involve teeth other than bicuspids. In either approach, baby teeth are sometimes removed early to prevent the permanent teeth from coming in crooked. If treatment is begun after the growth (mid-teenage) years, the need for extraction usually increases.
2. **When treatment is started** - With the traditional approach, treatment often begins around the age of 12 after all permanent teeth have erupted. With the alternative approach, treatment could begin as young as age 6, depending on the problems involved.
3. **The facial profile** - With the traditional approach, the facial profile is a secondary consideration when planning treatment. Sometimes, head gear is recommended to move the upper jaw back. With the alternative approach, the profile is a primary consideration, often resulting in the lower jaw being moved forward.
4. **The jaw joint (TMJ)** - With the traditional approach, it is thought the jaw joint is not usually affected by orthodontic treatment. With the alternative approach, it is thought the jaw joint is greatly affected, often adversely, by orthodontic treatment.
5. **The shape of the jaw** - With the traditional approach, surgical procedures could be utilized to change abnormal jaw shape or to align the jaws. With the alternative approach, special orthopedic mouth appliances are utilized to reshape or reposition jaws.

Be aware that, although not common, there have been reports of adverse reactions to treatment with metal braces. Reactions reported include depression, facial paralysis (Bell's Palsy), and suicidal thoughts. If a patient experiences any sudden, unexplainable changes in their behavior, or develops any physical symptoms shortly after placement of any stainless steel orthodontic appliances, the possibility that it is from a reaction to the nickel contained in the stainless steel braces should not be discounted. It is also possible it might be from locking up the primary respiratory mechanism, which is the natural pulsation recognized in osteopathy in the cranial field, or from electrical interference from the metal. Most dentists and physicians are not informed about these reported reactions.

However, there are alternatives to consider. A homeopathic remedy made from the actual metal braces to alleviate symptoms, gold-plated brackets, non-metal brackets, molded removable tooth "retainers" (Invisalign system), and removable acrylic orthopedic appliances.

In summary, it is not a matter of who is right or wrong, rather it is of differing philosophies, opinion, and choice. It is your responsibility to be knowledgeable and involved to obtain the most appropriate care for your situation.

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Traditional Treatment
TWIN "A"- Before



TWIN "A"- After



MPA/HT Type Treatment
TWIN "B"- Before



TWIN "B"- After



Figure 18.1 Identical Twins with Different Orthodontic Treatment