

INFORMED CONSENT

POTENTIAL RISKS AND LIMITATIONS OF ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

Generally, excellent orthodontic results can be achieved with informed and cooperative patients. You should be aware that orthodontic treatment, like treatment of any part of the body, has some inherent risks and limitations. These are seldom severe enough to offset the advantages of treatment, but they should be considered in making the decision to undergo orthodontic treatment.

Tooth decay, gum disease, recession, tooth mobility, and permanent white markings (decalcification) on the teeth can occur if patients do not brush and floss their teeth frequently and properly or eat foods containing excessive sugar. These same problems also can occur in patients not in braces, but the risk is greater while in braces.

A tooth that has been traumatized by an injury or a tooth that has a large filling may require endodontics (root canal) when it is moved with an orthodontic appliance. Sometimes a tooth may have a non-vital or damaged pulp (nerve) and orthodontic movement may make the need for endodontic treatment apparent.

In some patients the length of the roots of the teeth may be shortened during orthodontic treatment. Usually this is of no significant consequence, but on rare occasions it may become a serious threat to the longevity of the teeth involved.

Teeth have a tendency to change their positions after treatment. Usually this is only a minor change. Faithful wearing of retainers reduces this tendency. A common site for these changes to occur is in the lower front teeth where some changes in tooth positions should be expected. The relationship of the upper to lower teeth can change adversely due to such problems as chronic mouth breathing or tongue thrusting. Occasionally, unexpected or abnormal changes in the growth of the jaws may limit our ability to achieve the desired result. If growth becomes disproportionate, the relationship of the upper jaw to the lower jaw may change, requiring additional treatment or, in some cases, surgery. Severe growth disharmony is a biological process sometimes beyond the orthodontist's control.

There is a risk that problems may occur in the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) located just in front of the ear. Orthodontic treatment may help remove dental causes of TMJ problems, but not in all cases. In some cases, TMJ symptoms first become evident during or after orthodontic treatment.

The total time required to complete treatment may exceed our estimate. Excessive or deficient bone growth, poor cooperation, broken appliances and missed appointments are all important factors that can lengthen treatment and affect the quality of the results.

It is my professional opinion in this case that potential benefits from orthodontic treatment outweigh the risk that can reasonably be anticipated. If you have any questions about treatment and the potential risks involved, please do not hesitate to ask for further explanation at the pretreatment consultation.

I have read and understand the above and consent to treatment for: _____

Responsible Party: _____ Date: _____