



# RADIANT

## ORTHODONTICS

## YOUR GUIDE TO A RADIANT SMILE

This is a guide to help you through your orthodontic treatment. It will explain some of the procedures and answer many questions. Good orthodontic treatment is achieved only with a successful partnership between you, Dr Witt, and his staff.

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## I. WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO SEE AN ORTHODONTIST?

Orthodontic specialists have extensive and specialized training -- a minimum of 2 to 3 years of additional training beyond their dental degree, at an accredited university post-graduate program. Most people select an orthodontist because her or his specialty is correcting poor tooth arrangements. Usually, this is because the smile is unattractive and this can make people self-conscious. However, even though orthodontists take pride in creating better smiles for their patients, there are additional benefits:

- A comfortable bite or occlusion (the way the teeth fit together) making chewing better for many patients
- Easier home care with tooth-brushing and flossing. Crooked teeth have many nooks and crannies where food can be caught and cause tooth decay or periodontal disease (gum disease) because your tooth-brush and/or floss can't reach all of the hidden areas. Decay and periodontal disease can reduce the life span of the teeth

## II. MALOCCLUSION

You may hear Dr Witt and the staff use the word malocclusion. This literally means a "bad bite". This is what we are trained to correct. The three most common malocclusions are:



1. **Crowding ("tooth-size/jaw-size disharmony").**  
The size of the teeth is too large for the size of jaw



2. **The upper jaw is longer than the lower jaw**  
(one type of "skeletal discrepancy")



3. **The lower jaw is longer than the lower jaw** (one type of "skeletal discrepancy")

Malocclusions are often hereditary but oral habits such as thumb-sucking, finger-sucking, or mouth-breathing sometimes can cause or increase the severity of the malocclusion. If these habits are stopped and/or corrected at a young age, normal development and alignment of the permanent teeth will sometimes occur and this could prevent the need for orthodontic treatment later. **Furthermore, stopping bad oral habits before orthodontic treatment proceeds increases the chances of successful treatment.**

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### III. REMOVAL OF TEETH (EXTRACTIONS)

It is sometimes necessary for Dr Witt to have your dentist or an oral & maxillofacial surgeon (a specialist in extractions and surgeries of the face and jaws) to extract teeth in order to make your orthodontic treatment successful or to improve the natural eruption of the permanent teeth. The decision to remove teeth is always a carefully considered one, often requiring x-rays, models of the teeth, and/or photographs, and is made with the patient's best interest in mind.

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#### A. SERIAL EXTRACTION OR ERUPTION GUIDANCE WITH EXTRACTIONS

Many children are brought to the orthodontist because their permanent front teeth come in crooked after the baby teeth are lost. One way to manage this crowding is to selectively remove baby teeth before, or as, the permanent teeth erupt in order to make room for the permanent teeth. This is referred to as "serial extraction" or "eruption guidance with extractions". This method of managing crowding at an early age is a very common practice, often saving the patient from having badly crowded front teeth and frequently making future orthodontic treatment shorter and simpler.

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#### B. EXTRACTION OF PERMANENT TEETH

With the techniques and braces available today, extraction of permanent teeth is much less common than in years gone-by. However, it may still be necessary to have selected permanent teeth removed for a couple of reasons:

- There may not be enough room for all of the permanent teeth, or
- The front teeth may be too far forward: extractions can create space needed to bring the front teeth further back

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### IV. HOW TO BE A STAR PATIENT!

There are a few things that only you can do in order to ensure a quick and successful treatment:

1. **Keep your mouth sparkling clean** at all times
2. **Avoid breaking your braces** or any appliances. Braces and appliances are strong but can be broken by carelessness. By the way, orthodontists commonly refer to the system of braces and wires as an "appliance"
3. **Attend your appointments** at the intervals recommended
4. Make sure you are **on time for all appointments**
5. Carefully **follow all of the instructions** provided by Dr Witt and his staff
6. **Continue to see your dentist at regular intervals** during the orthodontic treatment so that she or he can check for any decay or periodontal problems

Follow these easy steps and you will have a healthy, beautiful smile in no time!

**It really is UP TO YOU!**

## V. ORAL HYGIENE

Good oral hygiene is necessary for a healthy, successful treatment. This involves the removal of the food left after eating and the removal of plaque: the colourless, sticky film of saliva, food and bacteria that is always forming on the teeth and causes decay and many periodontal (gum and bone) problems. It is important to remember that even with all of the fancy tools given to you to help keep your teeth clean, the most important thing is technique (how you use all of those tools).

The orthodontic braces and appliances do not cause decay: in fact braces and orthodontic bands protect the part of the tooth that they cover, as long as the glue or cement holding the braces or bands in place is still intact. However, the braces do create extra places for food and plaque to hide!

### A. BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

You can watch a video on tooth brushing with braces in the [Educational Videos](#) section of our website.

1. Use a soft toothbrush (or an electric toothbrush) and toothpaste with fluoride
2. Start by brushing all of the “lip-side” and “cheek-side” surfaces of the teeth and braces, using a circular motion. Alternate angling the toothbrush toward the chewing surface and toward the gums. This ensures that you are getting the bristles “behind” the wire. Pay special attention to the area between the braces and the gums as this is often where trouble starts.



3. Then move to the “tongue-side” surfaces of the teeth, using the same motion



4. Then brush the chewing surfaces of your teeth using a scrubbing motion



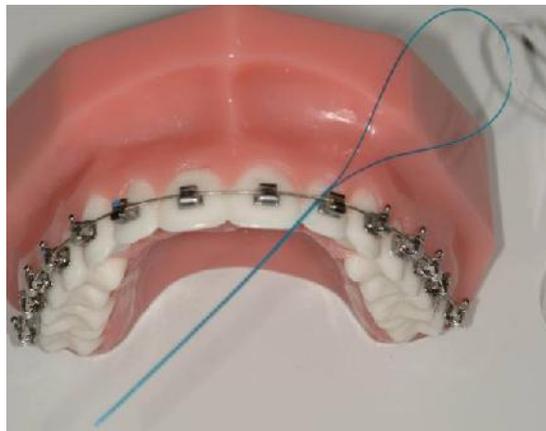
5. The very last step in brushing is the most important: check all of your teeth and braces very closely in the mirror to make sure that they shine. You can use the mirror that we have provided to you to see those “hard to see” places.



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## B. FLOSSING YOUR TEETH

Even the best brushing job cannot remove the plaque that sits between your teeth. This requires flossing. Using floss-threaders (we will provide you with some samples), thread the floss under the wire, then floss between those two teeth. Repeat this procedure by moving onto the next pair of teeth, and continue until all of your teeth are flossed.



Floss your teeth at least once a day. The evening is probably the best time to floss as it requires extra time that you may not have in the morning when you are getting ready for school or work. Besides, the most effective time to do your most thorough cleaning job is before bedtime, since the plaque will not be sitting in your mouth overnight when it can do considerable harm. Your mouth also tends to be more acidic during sleep. A guide to flossing can be found in the [Oral Hygiene](#) section of our website.

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### C. DISCLOSING TABLETS AND DISCLOSING SOLUTIONS

To be sure that you get all of the plaque, you can use a “disclosing tablet” or “disclosing solution”. These products will stain any plaque that remains so that you can see where you are missing with the tooth-brush and floss. You can then clean the areas you have missed.

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### D. FLUORIDE RINSES

When wearing braces, we recommend the daily use of a fluoride rinse. We recommend the daily use of Fluorinse 0.05% (by Oral B). This is a fluoride rinse that helps to prevent tooth decay and enamel decalcification by strengthening the minerals in tooth enamel that have been exposed to harmful acids. The use of Fluorinse does not replace daily brushing and flossing but should be done following your daily cleaning schedule at bedtime as follows:

1. Floss all your teeth
2. Brush all your teeth thoroughly
3. Rinse thoroughly with water
4. Place a small amount of the fluoride rinse in a cup or glass.
5. Swish that amount around your teeth for 1 minute
6. Spit out
7. Do not eat, drink, or rinse your mouth for at least 30 minutes
8. Repeat once daily

It is important for the active ingredient to stay on your teeth for 30 minutes. That is why its use just prior to bedtime is best. There may be other products that are as effective for this purpose but, unlike many other products that create a 'burning' sensation, Fluorinse is made in a manner that it can be tolerated easily in the mouth for 1 minute, even by very young patients. If choosing another fluoride rinse, look for a fluoride concentration of 0.05% since it has been proven to be the most effective.

**If you remove all of the plaque from your teeth daily and use the fluoride rinse as recommended, your teeth are not likely to decay (get cavities) or to get discolouration marks, and your gums are more likely to stay healthy throughout your orthodontic treatment.**

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## VI. APPOINTMENTS

Most orthodontic treatment can be expected to last from 12 to 36 months. Very difficult treatments can take even longer. Throughout this time, you will have appointments at scheduled intervals. Most of these appointments will be relatively short adjustments or checks, but there will be some more complex treatments that will require considerably longer appointments. The longer, more complicated appointments, like those required for placing braces and/or appliances, are best scheduled during the main part of the day, and as a result, must be scheduled **during school or work hours**.

Since most of our patients are in school or work full-time, it is not possible to see all them outside of school or work hours, so some of the shorter appointments may also need to be scheduled during work or school hours, although we always will try to be fair and accommodating to everyone. In an effort to minimize time missed for school or work, we have appointment times available at 7 AM and as late as 4:40 PM, and work during school lunch hours.

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## VII. DAMAGED APPLIANCES OR BRACES

Damaged appliances and braces are one of the biggest frustrations and nuisances for both the orthodontist and the patient. Damaged appliances always lead to **extra appointments, inconvenience, and extended treatment times**. We

understand that accidents happen, but most loose brackets, bands, or broken wires are due to patient carelessness. We need you to do your part in avoiding unnecessary breakage or damage that requires additional appointments.

#### A. THINGS TO AVOID IN ORDER TO PREVENT BREAKAGE OR DAMAGE:

1. **Avoid Bad Habits:** Things like fingernail biting, pen/pencil chewing, opening water bottles with your teeth, etc. Break the bad habits before they break your orthodontic appliances.
2. **Avoid Hard/Crunchy Foods:** Things like apples, carrots, hard candies, and hard chocolates, will bend wires or break or loosen brackets and bands. If you really enjoy these foods, some of them can be cut up into small pieces instead of biting directly into them. Others require that you never bite into them. Avoid biting into hard, icy treats or ice cubes, as they are particularly harmful since the cold makes the cement more brittle than normal increasing the chances of breakage. You can watch a video on the foods to avoid in the [Educational Videos](#) section of our website.
3. **Avoid Popcorn:** Popcorn should be avoided, not only due to the potential to bite into a hard “un-popped” kernel that can break or loosen a brace, but due to the “husks” from the “popped” kernels that can get lodged around the braces and under the gums and become difficult to identify. These husks are often impossible to remove at home and frequently cause infections of the gums if not removed in a timely manner.
4. **Avoid Sticky Foods:** Things like gum, caramels, gum drops, toffee, etc. will distort the orthodontic wires and may cause the wires to “escape” from the braces. By the way, there is no gum that is “safe”: the extra forces and chewing “strokes” that are involved with gum-chewing tend to cause loosening of the cements and fatiguing of the orthodontic wires.

#### B. INSPECTING YOUR BRACES



Inspect your braces every night for breakages, damages and open clips.

Any of the above items are:  
**ORTHODONTIC EMERGENCIES**

If you have an orthodontic emergency, call the office immediately, even if you have already booked an appointment.



You can watch a video describing the various parts of braces in the [Educational Videos](#) section of our website

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### C. CALL THE OFFICE

If you do have an accident or something is broken, it is very important to call the office immediately to let us know: don't wait for your next scheduled appointment. We can best decide on the timing of the repair that is in the best overall interest of your treatment and the health of your mouth. Even if you have an appointment on the same day that you have identified the problem or that the accident has occurred, **IMMEDIATELY CALL THE OFFICE TO TELL US THAT SOMETHING IS BROKEN**. We may need to make special arrangements, have specific instruments or staff available, or re-schedule your appointment in order to manage the problem properly.

If there is nobody in the office at the time of your call (for example, after we are closed for the day or the weekend), leave a voice mail message and someone will return your call as soon as possible. If you experience discomfort with your braces, there is always an emergency contact number on our voice mail message. If you haven't called to let us know about the problem, we may not be able to fix it the day that you arrive, which leads to making more appointments and extending your treatment time. We all are working together to complete your treatment as fast as possible.

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### D. SPORTS AND SPORT MOUTHGUARDS

Wearing braces should not interfere with your participation in and enjoyment of sports. However, for many sports, a mouthguard should be worn to protect you and your braces. More information on mouthguards can be found in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section of this website

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## VIII. AUXILIARY APPLIANCES

With any orthodontic appliances, if there are any problems with them including loosening, breakage, discomfort, or inability to wear them, contact the office immediately to schedule an appointment to manage the problem.

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### A. ELASTICS

Many of our patients will need to wear elastics at some time during their orthodontic treatment. The elastics are usually placed from the top braces to the bottom in order to allow additional movement of the teeth and jaws into the correct positions. They may be used on their own or in conjunction with headgear. It is important that the elastics be worn 24 hours per day including eating (when possible). For most patients, the only time the elastics should be out of the mouth is when cleaning the teeth and braces, and when replacing the elastics with new elastics. If worn correctly and consistently, elastics are very effective in helping to correct malocclusions.



As with headgear, the most important thing about wearing elastics is to follow our instructions in order to accomplish the treatment goals and to limit the length of time that you need to wear them. In situations where patients are not

wearing their elastics the prescribed amount, it may be necessary to use other appliances such as the Forsus (see below).

Complete instructions will be given to you if and when Dr Witt prescribes elastics for you.

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## B. FORSUS APPLIANCE

In certain circumstances to correct a lower jaw that is shorter than the upper jaw, the use of a Forsus Appliance (often called a Forsus Fixed Functional Appliance) will be appropriate. This appliance consists of two springs that are placed on either side of the mouth. The Forsus Appliance is not removable by the patient and is therefore worn 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.



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## C. PALATE EXPANDERS

In certain cases, Dr Witt will suggest a palate expander, often referred to as a “rapid palatal expander”. This is needed when the upper jaw is too narrow for the lower jaw and needs to be widened. To achieve this, the two halves of the upper jaw (the upper jaw is really made of 2 bones that meet at the midline of the palate) are separated and new bone is grown to fill in between the two halves.



These appliances are activated using a special key to rotate the center screw towards the back of the mouth. If you need one of these appliances, Dr Witt and his staff will give you specific instructions on how, and when, to turn the screw at home. You essentially become your own orthodontist for the time you are using this appliance!

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## IX. AFTER YOUR BRACES COME OFF!!

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### A. POSITIONERS

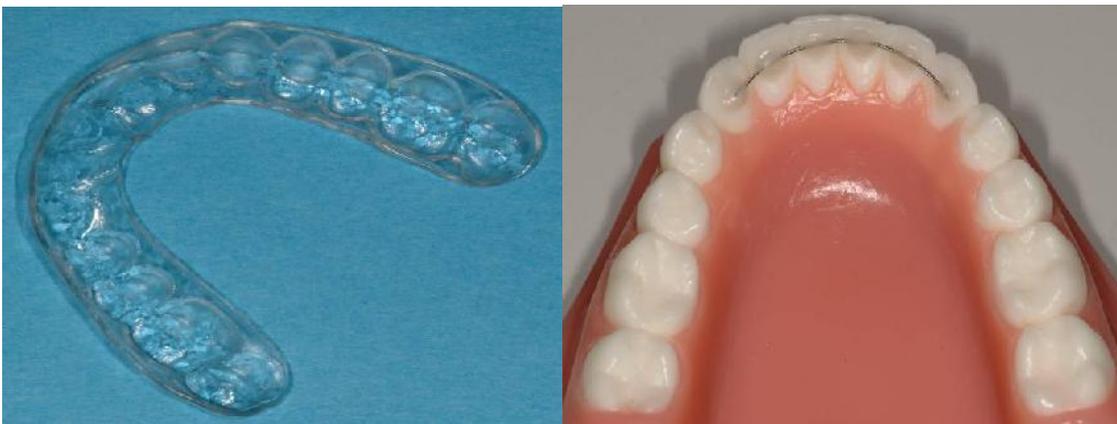


Some patients may require the use of a positioner to complete their orthodontic treatment. A positioner is made by taking an impression of your teeth to make a model of your mouth that is sent to the lab. At the lab, there are changes made to the position of your teeth and a rubber appliance is made. It is then up to you to wear the positioner as instructed. The force of you biting into the rubber appliance will “position”, or guide, your teeth into the right place to complete your treatment. There are specific reasons that a positioner would be used and Dr Witt will decide if this is the best option for you.

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### B. RETAINERS

When all of the hard work is done with the braces and appliances, you will want your smile to last for a lifetime. This is accomplished by the use of retainers. There are a variety of retainers that can be used, but the ones most commonly used at our office are the **Essix** clear retainer (most often in the upper jaw) and the **bonded wire** most often placed on the lower front teeth. It is very important that you follow our instructions regarding your retainers in order to help to maintain your beautiful smile for a lifetime!



If your retainers are ever lost or broken, it is very important to call the office immediately to have them repaired or remade. Without replacement or repair, you run the risk of your teeth shifting. **You might be surprised at just how quickly and how much your teeth will shift!** It really isn't worth gambling on this.

Over time, Dr Witt will give you instructions to reduce the amount of time that you are required to wear your retainer(s). However, it is unlikely that he will ever tell you to stop wearing them, or to have the bonded wire removed. This is because the most recent orthodontic research has shown that **your teeth will eventually move without retainer wear**, although there is no way to know when, or how much, your teeth will move. Consequently, the best insurance for a long-lasting, beautiful, smile is to continue to wear or maintain your retainers, even after you are no longer coming back to see us.

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## X. WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

If you have any problems at any time during your orthodontic treatment or with your retainers, call the office immediately: **604-946-9771**. If the office is closed, you can leave a voicemail message or send an email to [info@radiantorthodontics.com](mailto:info@radiantorthodontics.com) and we will contact you as soon as we are back in the office to schedule an appointment. In the event of an injury (blow to the face and teeth etc) or any conditions that make normal jaw function difficult or impossible, the voicemail message at the office will direct you to a **24/7 emergency number**.

We realize you have other choices when it comes to orthodontic treatment and we'd like to thank you for choosing Radiant Orthodontics as your care providers. We are confident that you will be happy with your decision to work with us to get the "Radiant Smile" you deserve!