

KEY ITEMS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING AN ORTHODONTIST

Choosing an orthodontist is not always easy, but it is well worth your time to do the research and ask the right questions. If you are going to invest the time and money into a beautiful smile and healthy bite, you want to make sure that at the end of it all you haven't compromised on the final result. All orthodontic treatment is NOT the same. The facilities and technology are a reflection of the orthodontist who will create the smile that you or your child will have the rest of your life.

This list will help you make the right decision for you and your family.

Review the Orthodontist

There is a common misconception that as long as a doctor has a degree, they will be able to give you the same results as anyone else. If that was the case, finding the lowest fee would make sense. Unfortunately, not all treatment is the same. Orthodontists differ in training, experience, and in personality. Some are trained to create space by expanding the jaw, others prefer to remove teeth. Some are very particular about their final results while others are content with a **near enough is good enough** approach. Some have an eye for beauty and others are just mouth mechanics. For something this important, you should consider the following:

1. Ask to see actual examples of their work.
2. Do they offer a variety of options for treatment?
3. Make sure you understand the treatment plan.

Make sure they are a Specialist Orthodontist

There is a big difference between a dentist and an orthodontist. To become a dentist you must complete a five year Dental Degree at University. And then to become a specialist orthodontist, you have a further **three years of full time study** as well as **thousands of hours** of hands on clinical experience in Orthodontics. Orthodontics is a complex field that requires long term and ongoing study and additional years of practice in order to master. Make sure whomever you chose for your orthodontic treatment is a specialist orthodontist registered with the Australian Dental Association and the Australian Society of Orthodontists. This way you can be sure you are being treated by a qualified specialist and your investment will produce the best results for you.

There are many businesses that offer weekend courses to general dentists in orthodontics. Most of these weekend training courses spend more time on marketing and promotion than on diagnosis and treatment planning. Is it plausible that a general dentist can produce the same results as a specialist after a two day course? Or does it make sense that they can do it quicker and cheaper? **If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.**

Ensure the Practice Uses the Latest Technology

There have been significant advances in orthodontic treatment in recent years. Ask for an office tour and ask for a detailed explanation of what technology is utilised to deliver excellent and efficient results. New technology will enable you to see a simulation of your results before you start treatment, as well as give you fewer appointments and shorter treatment times. **This means less time out of school and work.** Ask how often your appointments will be. You should be seeing your orthodontist about every 6-8 weeks, anything shorter may be evidence that older technologies are being used.

Check Reviews

Many orthodontic offices are reviewed on independent review sites like Google. It is a good idea to read those reviews. It is also a good idea to ask the practice if there are some existing patients you could talk to about how it is being treated at the office. Be wary of fake reviews!

Cost

An attractive, healthy smile is an asset that can last a lifetime. Not only will orthodontic treatment influence how you feel about yourself, it will also contribute to how healthy and stable your teeth are in the long run. It is too important a decision to simply accept the lowest cost. All smiles are not created equally and just because a provider has a license is no guarantee that you'll be happy with the results. As with most things in life, you usually get what you pay for. When it comes to your smile, you can't afford to make a mistake. Before making a final decision, allow us to review your quote and help you compare the value you are getting.

Payment Options

Orthodontists bill and receive payment in different ways. Some offer payment plans, most require a hefty deposit and others may offer incentives when you pay-in-full. Ask how your treatment costs are determined and whether there will be additional fees during treatment, emergency appointments, retention or subsequent follow-up care. The most important factor to consider when comparing treatment costs is the included value. You are better off getting it done right the first time and having optimal results for your smile that will last a life-time, than going with a cheaper option and being disappointed with less than optimal results that may relapse.

Fast and Cheap Treatment Options

You may hear on the radio or TV about these so-called "new" treatment options that can straighten teeth in months not years and can do it cheaper than regular braces or without orthodontic treatment at all. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

There is nothing new about the braces used in these so-called "fast-orthodontics" options. They are the same brackets and wires used in traditional orthodontics. The rate of tooth movement is limited by the natural processes in the bone and ligaments around the teeth and ALL doctors are limited by these biological rules. So if the rate of tooth movement is the same, how can they get the **same result in a quicker time for less money?**

The answer lies in the phrase "same result"? These providers are shooting for a different end result. Specialist orthodontists do not only align the front teeth but also correct crowding, protrusion, open bites, deep bites, over bites and cross bites etc. So the quick treatment option isn't faster, **it is just stopped before the treatment is completely finished**. Just straightening teeth without treating the problems mentioned above may leave the smile worse than before and create bite problems that can negatively impact the health of your teeth. Furthermore, they are likely to relapse.

Orthodontists are specialists who undergo an additional 3 years of study and thousands of clinical hours of training. Does it make sense to that a dentist who has undergone a two-day course can straighten your teeth faster and cheaper than a specialist? Obviously not!

You only get one set of teeth. Whomever you decide to go with, you should do your homework and make sure you get the right treatment the first time.

If you have any questions, our friendly team are here to help.

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Specialist Orthodontist

Clear Smiles Orthodontics