



Patient Information Leaflet

# Orthodontic treatment following the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in England



## Introduction

This is a guide about the re-opening of NHS orthodontic services following the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

At the end of March 2020 routine dental services were closed for several weeks in line with government policy. From 8 June, orthodontic practices have reopened for face to face appointments once the appropriate safety measures are in place.

## When will my child's NHS orthodontic treatment restart?

Your child's orthodontist will be in touch to discuss the continuation of their treatment. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact the practice.

## How long will my child's treatment take in light of the pandemic and will the NHS support this?

Due to issues of capacity and social distancing, your child's treatment may take longer to start and to complete. The NHS is committed to completing your child's treatment (if they are

eligible for orthodontic treatment). Waiting list times may vary in different parts of England.

## I was awaiting an orthodontic assessment. This was cancelled due to lockdown. I am about to turn 18 / have since turned 18. Will I still be entitled to NHS funded orthodontic treatment?

Patients who are on a waiting list for an orthodontic assessment or orthodontic treatment, who turned 18 during the COVID-19 period will not be disadvantaged. If you have any concerns, please speak to your referring dentist.

## My child was already on a waiting list waiting for treatment. When will my child be seen?

Owing to capacity issues caused by COVID-19, your child may have to wait longer than usual to be seen. We appreciate your ongoing understanding and will try to see patients as soon as possible.

### **What will be different when I attend for an appointment?**

Your practice will be operating in a way that observes COVID-19 social distancing and hygiene rules. It will look different to usual, due to the measures taken to ensure your safety and that of the dental team.

There will be many changes introduced, from the way your practice offers you appointments, to the assessments the practice will carry out prior to your arrival, and to the way you will be seen at the practice.

The dental team may be wearing different protective equipment to what you are used to seeing. It is likely to be some months before services return to what you previously experienced as normal.

Whilst the practice is observing social distancing you should telephone your practice rather than attending in person without an appointment.

### **What should I do if I think my teeth have moved during the lockdown period?**

For whatever reason your teeth may have moved, if you are currently undergoing NHS orthodontic treatment, please contact your orthodontist. If you have completed your treatment within the past 12 months, please speak with your general dental practitioner.

Patients whose treatment has been impacted because of COVID-19 will not be disadvantaged.

### **What should I do if I have lost/broken my retainers during the lockdown period?**

This query applies to current orthodontic patient who have been impacted during COVID-19. If you have lost your retainers, you may have to pay a replacement fee. If your retainers have been broken through fair 'wear and tear', your orthodontist may replace them for free if you are within the 12-month retention period.

### **My orthodontist has stopped NHS treatment following the reprocurement of services. I finished my treatment but now have an orthodontic problem. What should I do?**

Please speak with your general dental practitioner.

### **What should I do if I have an urgent dental problem?**

If you think you need urgent dental treatment or have a concern about your oral health, you should phone your general dental practice for advice. You are likely to be offered a remote video or telephone consultation. If your dentist assesses you as needing a face-to-face consultation for an urgent dental treatment and is unable to undertake this at their practice, you may be referred to an urgent dental care centre. Alternatively, if you cannot contact your dentist use the [NHS 111 online](#) service or call 111.

### **How can I care for my orthodontic appliances between appointments?**

It is important to look after your braces to reduce the risk of you requiring emergency appointments and to help your treatment succeed. You must also maintain a high standard of oral hygiene.

To avoid breakages, avoid hard, sticky and chewy foods. Try to cut up foods such as apples, carrots and crusty bread before eating them.

To maintain oral hygiene, avoid sugary snacks and drinks between meals and at bedtime. Brush your teeth last thing at night and at least on one other occasion for two minutes using a fluoride toothpaste. Spit out after brushing and do not rinse, to maintain fluoride concentration levels.

### **Who do I contact if I have any queries or questions that are not covered within this leaflet?**

If you have a comment or concern about a dentist or orthodontist, in the first instance you should discuss your concerns with the practice. If your

concerns cannot be resolved locally with the practice, you can contact NHS England using the details below.

NHS England  
PO Box 16738  
Redditch  
B97 9PT

Telephone number: 0300 311 22 33

Email: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)