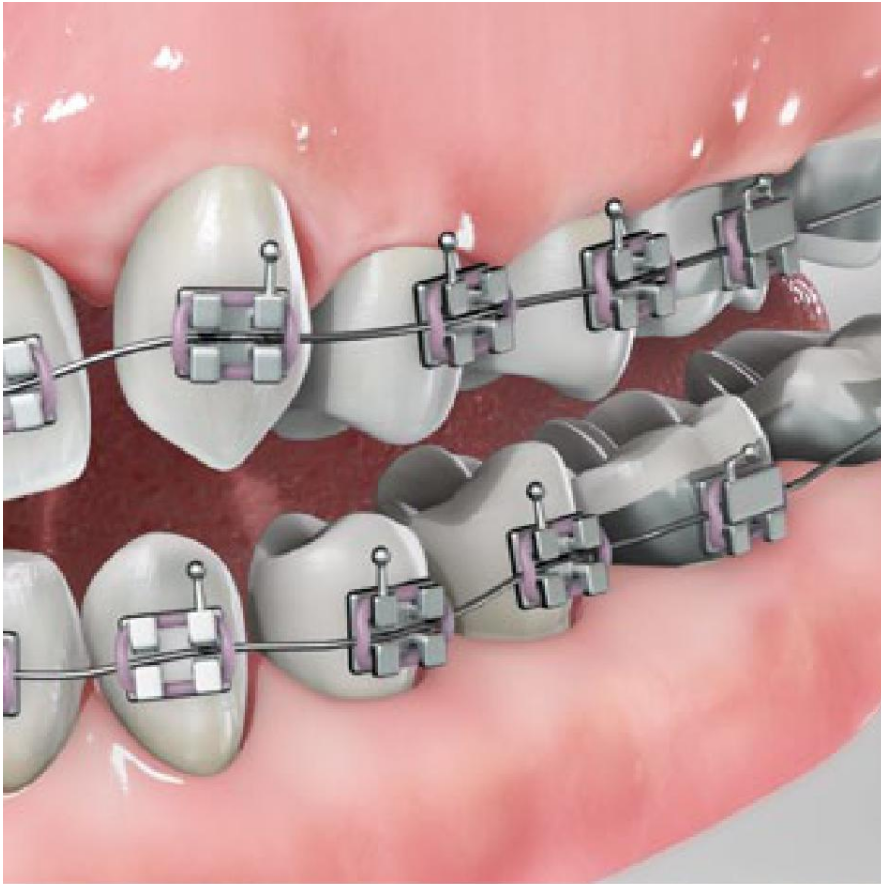




Braces (Fixed Dental Braces)



Overview

If your smile isn't quite what it could be, your dentist may recommend braces. Braces use constant pressure to slowly change the position of your teeth. Braces can correct a wide range of problems. They can straighten crooked teeth. They can move teeth to prevent crowding. And, they can correct the alignment of your bite.

Preparation

Your braces are put on and maintained by an orthodontist. That's a specialist who deals with the position of your teeth. Before you get braces, your orthodontist will examine your mouth and make casts of your teeth. If your mouth is crowded, you may need to have some teeth removed. Or, you may need to have some other oral procedure.

Getting your braces

There are many types of braces. The traditional kind are metal. Brackets are cemented to your front teeth, and bands are cemented around your molars. Then, a strong, flexible wire is attached through the brackets and bands. It's tightened to put pressure on your teeth.

Maintenance

Your teeth and jaw will move very gradually. You'll return for regular checkups and adjustments. Your orthodontist may use things like rubber bands and headgear to put more pressure on your teeth as needed. While you wear your braces, follow your orthodontist's rules for brushing, flossing and foods to avoid.

Conclusion

Most people wear braces for one to three years. When they are removed, you may need to wear retainers to keep your teeth in position. Your orthodontist will give you tips for maintaining your new smile.