



10 THINGS YOU MUST KNOW BEFORE CHOOSING YOUR ORTHODONTIST

It's Never Too Late for a Great Smile

Orthodontics is not just for kids. In fact, 20% of orthodontic patients in the US are adults. More and more adults are discovering that a healthy smile can transform their health and their self-confidence.

Many people have never had orthodontic treatment before and decide that it's about time they took this important step towards transforming their smile and improving their health.

It's important to choose an orthodontist that specializes in adult cases, because:

Adult patients have different needs than younger patients.

One thing is for sure—orthodontics today looks nothing like it did when you were younger. Twenty and thirty years ago orthodontic treatment for adults was practically unheard of. And the options were big, clunky, and downright ugly!

Today, the stigma attached to adult orthodontics has all but disappeared. Adult orthodontic treatment is affordable, comfortable, and in many cases, completely invisible.

There are more options for orthodontic treatment than ever before. So when it comes to choosing your orthodontist, knowledge is power. On the surface, all orthodontists may seem like they are offering the same thing. But there are important differences that can make or break your experience and determine the quality of your results.

In this report, you'll learn what questions you should be asking your orthodontist, what to look for, and how to get the most out of your consultation visit.

1. Is the Office Professional, Welcoming, and Comfortable?



When you visit the office, notice the atmosphere.

- Does it look and feel juvenile?
- Are you the only adult patient there?
- Is it decorated with a spaceship or underwater theme or is the décor modern, stylish, and adult?

The atmosphere and vibe in the office will tell you a lot about the practice right off the bat.

You'll be coming in for appointments for at least a year or two, so it's important that you feel comfortable coming to the office and spending time in the reception room.

2. Be Sure to Ask About Invisalign®



Invisalign, commonly known as "invisible braces" has created a revolution in orthodontic treatment. These clear plastic removable aligners have made it possible to get a straight smile without dealing with metal braces and brackets. In fact, no one will notice you have them. Invisalign is now able to successfully treat the majority of adult patients for a price comparable to traditional braces.

There are many orthodontists (and some general dentists) now doing Invisalign. But not all orthodontists are created equal. And your results will vary based on the expertise, knowledge, and skill of your provider. **That's why it's so important to choose an orthodontist with a "Premier Preferred Provider" certification—this means that they are an expert, and in the top 5% of Invisalign providers in the country.**

The average Invisalign provider only sees a few patients per year, most of them "easy" cases. So be sure you're getting the best treatment possible – ask your orthodontist about their Invisalign track record.

There are some general dentists out there now offering Invisalign. But you might be surprised to learn that many of these dentists have only taken a one-day Invisalign course to become certified. And while they may be excellent dentists, they don't have the years of formal orthodontic training and thousands of successfully treated orthodontic patients necessary to get the best possible results for you.

Not all orthodontists are created equal!

Choose an Invisalign "Premier Preferred Provider" for best results.



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3. Do You Feel Comfortable With the Orthodontist?

While expertise is a major factor in choosing an orthodontist, there's a lot to be said for how you relate to the doctor on a personal level.

- **Your orthodontist should answer all of your questions patiently and thoroughly, clearly explaining the treatment plan and all of your options, and taking the time to get to know you.**
- Notice how the orthodontist interacts with their staff. Is there any tension or do the staff and doctor work together like a well-oiled machine?
- Does the orthodontist treat each patient personally? Some orthodontic practices have a "team" of orthodontists, and you don't know who you'll see at any given appointment. Many patients would rather know that they'll see the same doctor at every appointment.
- Is the doctor accessible to answer any questions you may have between appointments?

These are all important questions to ask during your consultation.

Checklist for Choosing a Doctor

- ☒ Answers questions patiently and thoroughly
- ☒ Clearly explains treatment plan
- ☒ Friendly, caring, and warm
- ☒ Works with staff as a team
- ☒ Accessible when you need them
- ☒ Experience with adult patients
- ☒ Up-to-date on latest technology
- ☒ Makes continuing education courses a priority



4. Does the Orthodontist Have Experience With Adult Patients?

It bears repeating: not all orthodontists are created equal. And that's especially true when it comes to treating adult patients.

Sure, all orthodontists finished dental school and specialized orthodontic training. But that's not the end of the story. At your consultation, find out how long your orthodontist has been practicing.

Ask how many adult cases they treat per year. An orthodontist who mainly treats children will have a different outlook on your treatment plan than one who sees adult patients every single day.

Be wary of an orthodontist who recommends extracting several teeth. An experienced adult orthodontist will be more conservative about doing extractions, and will use other techniques to try to save as many teeth as possible.

Continuing education is also an important gauge of expertise. Like any other medical field, technology and practices are constantly being improved.

Ask your orthodontist how many continuing education courses they attend per year. Most orthodontists will attend a few of these, but those who attend upwards of ten every year are the ones who are on the cutting edge of the latest techniques.

5. *Is the Office Using the Latest Technology?*



Orthodontic technology and techniques are constantly changing. Every year new innovations make treatment faster, easier, more comfortable, and more effective.

But not all orthodontists keep up with the latest technology. Ask your orthodontist if they still take impressions using the “goop” or if they use the iTero Scanner that’s fast, easy, and goop-free.

Do they use digital X-rays which are clearer, safer, and better for the environment?

Do they have digital check-in and record keeping which ensures a streamlined flow of information?

A stuffy, old-fashioned office with out-of-date technology may point to an orthodontist who isn’t interested in changing with the times—even if those changes are for the better.

6. *Is the Staff Friendly and Professional?*



When you walk into the office, notice how you are greeted by the staff at the front desk.

Are you welcomed right away and made to feel at home?

Do the doctor and staff smile, laugh, and joke around with one another?

That’s a sure sign that they’ve been working together for a long time and have warm, genuine, relationships.

It might not be the first thing you think about, but make no mistake—the office environment plays an important role in your experience. When you choose an orthodontist whose staff has been working together for many years, you know that there is a pleasant office atmosphere, the members of the staff are capable and know how to solve problems quickly, and they are much more likely to give you the best care possible.

7. *Are There Flexible Payment Options?*



In many cases, the availability of flexible payment options is more important than the total bottom line cost.

Ask if the office is willing to work with your financial situation to create a customized payment plan. How much is the down payment, and are they willing to accommodate your needs?

Inquire about third-party financing options and in-office, no-interest financing options. Many orthodontists will also give a greater discount if you can pay in full.

If your insurance covers orthodontics, be sure to find out which plans the orthodontist accepts.

A good orthodontic practice will not let finances be an obstacle to getting the treatment you need.

8. Does the Treatment Plan Fit Your Lifestyle?



As an adult, you want your orthodontic treatment to be as quick, convenient, and invisible as possible. Ideally, no one should be able to tell that you have braces at all, unless you choose to tell them.

So when the orthodontist proposes a treatment plan, make sure it fits with your lifestyle.

Invisalign® is the easiest and most attractive solution for getting the smile you want.

Most people are great candidates for Invisalign, especially with an orthodontist who has experience treating even the most complex cases with Invisalign.

But if you're not a candidate, innovations in braces technology have made even clear or metal braces small, discreet, and nearly invisible.

At your consultation, be sure to ask the orthodontist all of your questions about the treatment plan. Knowing what to expect is key.

9. Is the Office Convenient and Flexible?

Advances in orthodontic treatment mean that you will need fewer appointments than in the past, and they will likely be shorter. But you can still expect to spend a minimum of one or two years seeing your orthodontist. **So you want to make sure that the office locations are convenient, and that you can always find plenty of parking.**

We're all busy—juggling work, family, and other commitments. So your appointments should be made based on what's convenient for you, not the orthodontist.

Be sure to ask about the average time spent in the waiting room, and how often you'll need to schedule your appointments.

10. Your Overall Impression Counts

Many people make the mistake of choosing an orthodontist based on just a few of these criteria. They'll choose the lowest price, or the closest to their home, or the doctor that's been practicing the longest—even if they don't feel completely comfortable.

These people may end up unhappy with their experience—or worse, disappointed with the results of the treatment.

Like most things in life, it's the small details that can make or break your experience. **So choose an orthodontist who cares about the details. This ensures that you not only get a beautiful end result, but that the whole experience is pleasant and comfortable.**

