



### Why get orthodontic treatment?

Correctly aligned teeth and jaws are important to effectively eat and speak. A beautiful smile and improved appearance can lead to higher self-esteem, confidence and self-image.

Straighter teeth are also important to avoid tooth decay and periodontal (gum) problems. Brushing, flossing and regular dental care are more effective on straight teeth, as regular brushing may not reach spaces between misaligned teeth.

### What if can happen if I don't address the problem?

Tooth decay, periodontal disease and worn down teeth are all possible outcomes of untreated orthodontic issues, and can lead to tooth loss. If you think your child's teeth are at risk, it is important to consult with an orthodontist before the first sign of a larger problem. It is easier to make adjustments to the position of teeth in a younger, growing jaw than in a fully formed mature one that is firmer and more resistant to tooth movement.

### Isn't orthodontic treatment expensive?

Orthodontic treatment can be expensive. However, if a potential problem is addressed early, it may save thousands of dollars in necessary extensive care in the future. Orthodontics are covered at 50% for TRICARE Dental Program enrollees up to the age of 21 (or 23 for full-time students). Lifetime maximums and cost shares apply, so it is important to check your benefits before beginning treatment.

### What else do I need to know about orthodontia?

It's more important than ever to keep up with rigorous daily dental care. Patients undergoing orthodontia treatment are even more at risk of dental decay because of all the new areas where plaque can hide. Brushing twice a day, flossing once a day and regular dentist visits are vital steps toward the success of orthodontic treatment.

**For information on the TRICARE Dental Program, or to find more "Dental Health 101" tips, visit us online at [www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com](http://www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com).**