



TRUE OR FALSE

1. Orthodontists are specialists.

***TRUE:** Like their specialist counterparts in medicine (cardiologists, neurologists, gastroenterologists, etc.) orthodontists receive more formal education to be specialists. Orthodontists specialize in straightening teeth and aligning jaws. Like dentists, orthodontists graduate from dental school, but then, to be an orthodontist, it takes an additional two to three academic years of education in an accredited orthodontic residency program. Orthodontists are dentistry's specialists in straightening teeth and aligning jaws to create optimal function and form. Orthodontists only practice orthodontics.* They treat hundreds of patients a year, drawing on tried-and-true and new orthodontic appliance technologies to get patients to the best results.*

2. You should only visit an orthodontist for challenging and complex orthodontic cases.

***FALSE:** Orthodontists have the education, experience and expertise to treat all levels of orthodontic problems. A seemingly "simple" case can be hiding subtle problems that only an orthodontist can recognize. Rely on an orthodontist to diagnose and successfully treat all problems with tooth and jaw alignment.*

3. Orthodontists do not use clear aligners to straighten teeth.

***FALSE:** Orthodontists are not limited to the use of one kind of appliance (the "tools" used to move teeth and align jaws)—they have knowledge of the full range of orthodontic appliances, and what to use to correct each patient's orthodontic problem. Orthodontists may use clear aligners, braces and other orthodontic appliances to correct tooth and jaw alignment maladies. Orthodontists know what to use and when to use it because they work with these tools every day. Orthodontists build on their knowledge of orthodontics through on-going continuing education in orthodontic technology and practice.*

4. Braces aren't just for kids anymore.

***TRUE:** More than one in five current orthodontic patients is an adult. And braces are just one type of "appliance" (device) that orthodontists use in orthodontic treatment for adults, teens and children.*

5. If there was a giant, overhead magnet and someone flipped a switch, people wearing braces would fly out of their chairs and stick to the ceiling.

***FALSE:** It would be a really cool party trick, but it couldn't happen.*

6. Braces and aligners are painful and take two years or more for the desired result.

***FALSE:** After a brief adjustment period, like breaking in a new pair of shoes, braces and aligners are comfortable. And while every case is different, a 2010 survey** found that the average treatment time for patients is 22 months.*

7. Getting orthodontic treatment means I'll have to commit to constant doctor visits and inconvenient appointments.

FALSE:** The average appointment commitment is only once every six weeks.

8. Braces are ugly, call attention to themselves and would be embarrassing in business settings.

***FALSE:** Today's braces may be nearly invisible thanks to tiny metal or ceramic brackets and thin wires. Some braces can be completely unseen, mounted on the back (lingual) side of teeth. Besides, like watching your diet or going to the gym, orthodontic treatment is a change for the better. With a healthy smile, you can face your career with confidence.*

9. Anyone is eligible to join the American Association of Orthodontists.

***FALSE:** Only orthodontists may become members of the American Association of Orthodontists, and 95 percent of all educationally eligible orthodontists in the U.S. are AAO members. To be "educationally eligible" means that the doctor must graduate from dental school, then complete 2-3 years of specialty education at an accredited orthodontic residency program. Only those who successfully complete this extensive education may call themselves "orthodontists." And only orthodontists may be members of the American Association of Orthodontists.*

10. Even if I wanted to get orthodontic treatment, it's too expensive.

***FALSE:** Orthodontists have a variety of payment plans and options to make orthodontic treatment affordable. Plus, 60 percent** of all new patients in 2010 had dental insurance that included orthodontic benefits. Many employers offer options like FSAs (flexible spending accounts) to offset healthcare costs not covered by insurance. Funds in FSA accounts are considered pre-tax dollars.*

Check with AAO members in your area to learn about the affordability of today's orthodontic care.

**Unless they have completed specialty education in another dental specialty such as pediatric dentistry or periodontics.*

***AAO 2010 Member & Patient Census Study*