



Milnor
ORTHODONTICS

10 THINGS
TO KNOW
BEFORE
CHOOSING AN
ORTHODONTIST

Deciding to get braces or Invisalign for yourself or your child is a big deal. Successfully completing treatment requires committing time and money, both of which are usually in limited supply.

Choosing the right orthodontist can mean the difference between having an enjoyable journey to a straighter smile and being unhappy with the process, the end result, or both. So how do you find the orthodontist who is right for you? Start by knowing these 10 things before you commit to any type of treatment.

Milnor
ORTHODONTICS



1

TREATMENT COST

While not the only factor to consider, cost is the top concern for most patients and parents. Orthodontists set the costs for every treatment they provide, so prices can vary widely among practices.

Once a price has been quoted, it's important to confirm exactly what is included. Is the quote just for the braces and having them put on, or does it include the appointments necessary throughout treatment? Does it include other items like x-rays, digital scans, and retainers to wear after treatment is complete? If you are quoted a price that seems much lower than you were anticipating, all of these services may not be included.



2 TYPES OF TREATMENT

There are treatments that the majority of orthodontists offer, like silver braces with rubber bands and Invisalign for adults, but there are other treatments that some orthodontists may not include in their services. If you are looking for clear ceramic braces for yourself, WildSmiles® braces for your child, or Invisalign Teen for your teen, make sure the doctors you are considering offer these products before you get too attached.

Another treatment aspect to consider is the use of impressions vs. digital images. It used to be that everyone had to get impressions made with unpleasant molds and sticky compound, but today, lots of orthodontists use scanners, such as the iTero system, to take digital pictures before treatment begins.



3

PAYMENT PLANS

Payment plans can make paying for braces or Invisalign much easier. Orthodontists can offer their own in-office payment plans, third-party plans, or no payment plan option at all. Third-party plans are often more straightforward, with a set down payment and monthly payment, while in-office plans tend to be more flexible because the practice determines what they are willing to accept as a down payment or monthly.

Neither one of these options is necessarily better than the other, just understand how the plan works and determine if it's right for you.



4

INSURANCE

Because orthodontic insurance generally doesn't come as a separate type of coverage, many people are pleasantly surprised to discover that at least a portion of their treatment is covered by their dental or health insurance policy.

However, not all orthodontists accept every type of insurance, and how insurance payments are handled varies between practices. For example, some orthodontists will help you figure out how much of your treatment will be covered and will have the insurance payments sent directly to them. Other offices may require you to pay the full amount owed and have you request reimbursement from your insurance company.



5

CONVENIENCE

Orthodontic treatment doesn't happen in one visit. Follow-up visits occur anywhere from every 6 weeks to every 10 or 12 weeks. To make it more convenient, some orthodontists monitor their patients virtually. Instead of coming to the office, patients submit specific photos of their teeth through an app and the orthodontist can review their progress. This cuts down on the number of trips to the office.

When you do have to visit in person, distance is an important consideration, and so is traffic during the time of day you will most likely be going. Not having to pay to park or search for on-street parking is also something many people prefer.

Having different ways to communicate with an orthodontic practice also increases the convenience of your treatment. Gone are the days of only being able to call or text the office, many places now also allow you to text them or chat through social media.



6

STAFF

Similar to going to the dentist, on many visits to the orthodontist the majority of your time will be spent with the practice's staff, not just the orthodontist. Make sure you are comfortable talking to everyone in the office and that they are knowledgeable.

If you prefer seeing the same team members during your appointments, either go to a smaller practice that only has one office and a handful of staff, or confirm that certain people will be assigned to you or your child if you go to a larger office.



UNIVERSITY

7

EXPERIENCE

Orthodontics isn't just about having a prettier smile, it also addresses underlying oral health issues that can affect the rest of your life. So, it goes without saying that you want an orthodontist who knows what they're doing. Many orthodontists have their credentials hanging in their office, but if they don't, feel free to ask them about their educational background. They should also be keeping up with the latest technology and techniques through continuing education.

The orthodontist you choose should also have experience in the specific treatment you desire. Invisalign ranks orthodontists based on how many cases they handle in one year. The eight levels range from Bronze to Diamond Plus. If you want Invisalign, selecting an orthodontist at a higher level means you are using a professional who has more experience with this type of treatment. If you are interested in braces or early orthodontic treatment instead, the Invisalign designation obviously isn't as important.



8

REPUTATION

One of the best ways to find the right orthodontist for you is by asking friends, co-workers, neighbors, and family members. Just because one person may have had a bad experience with a practice doesn't necessarily mean you will. But if you ask several people for recommendations, and you hear a name or two repeated a few times, it is more likely you will have a positive experience with that orthodontist as well.

Many people use online reviews and comments on social media when finding an orthodontist, which can definitely be helpful, but don't pass a practice by just because one anonymous reviewer was unhappy. You may have a completely different experience.



9

AVAILABILITY

The best orthodontist in the country will not be able to help if you aren't able to get to their office during their business hours. Make sure the hours they are open coincide with times you are able to go for appointments. Some offices open early, some stay open late or are open on Saturdays, and some have limited hours just a few days a week.

Just like any other emergency, most orthodontic emergencies seem to occur outside of regular office hours. Be sure the orthodontist you are considering has a plan in place for these types of situations that you are comfortable with, whether it is a third-party answering service, a voicemail system, or a staff member on call at all times.



10

FREE EXAMS

Yes, you read that right. Many orthodontists offer free exams to potential patients. Take advantage of this and check out a few offices before you commit. The free exam usually includes x-rays and scans of your mouth, treatment recommendations, and information about cost and payment options. They may also check with your insurance provider to see what is covered.

In addition to all of this information, a free exam gives you a chance to meet the orthodontist and staff, check out the office, and do a test run to see if the location is convenient. Be sure to collect as much information in writing as possible so you can compare the options when you get home.

Choosing which orthodontist is best is really a personal decision, and some of the above factors may be more important to you than others, but we hope this information helps you find the right practice for you and your child.

