

ORTHODONTICS SERIES

# Orthodontic Diagnosis

Malocclusion is the dental term for teeth that don't fit together properly. Literally, malocclusion means "bad bite." Orthodontics is the branch of dentistry that corrects malocclusions and brings your teeth into proper alignment.

Some people are lucky and naturally have straight teeth. Others aren't as lucky. The size of your teeth and how they fit into your jaw are inherited traits, and malocclusion can often affect several generations. Besides genetics, malocclusions can also be caused by:

- Accidents or disease
- A missing tooth, allowing the teeth around the open space to shift
- Habits, such as thumb sucking, which can put pressure on teeth



*Straighten that smile*



*A smile-in-progress with braces*



*Orthodontics can help at any age*

There are many types of malocclusions. Your upper or lower jaw may be too far in or out. There may not be enough space in your mouth for your teeth to develop properly, leading to crowding. On the other hand, you might have too much space between your teeth, allowing them to shift, or your teeth may be in crossbite, which means that one or more of your upper teeth bite inside your lower teeth.

A malocclusion that isn't corrected can really affect your profile and appearance. Poorly aligned teeth can also contribute to tooth decay, bone destruction, loss of teeth, and jaw joint problems. These may in turn cause headaches, difficulty in opening and closing your mouth, clicking and popping sounds, and sore, painful jaw muscles.

Correcting your bite through orthodontic treatment can improve your dental health, and it has the added bonus of boosting your self-confidence and giving you a terrific looking smile.