INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Risks **and benefits**

of orthodontic treatment

PORTADOWN ORTHODONTICS

Before treatment starts, we will ask you (or your parent or guardian if you are under 16) to sign a consent form. This leaflet explains, in plain words, what you are agreeing to. Please read it carefully. If anything is unclear, **ask your clinician during your appointment**.

The **benefits**

Orthodontic treatment can give you a **pleasing smile** and **healthy teeth and gums**. Excellent results are usually possible when the patient, parent and orthodontist work closely together. There are some limitations and risks, which are explained below.

Possible **risks**

- **Soreness.** Teeth often feel sore and tender when they move, especially after the brace is adjusted. This usually settles over the next few days. Simple painkillers (always check with a parent and follow the instructions on the packet) can help for a day or two, and wax helps if the brace rubs your cheeks or tongue.
- **White marks and decay.** Food and plaque collect around braces, especially fixed (train-track) braces. If they are not brushed away, white marks (decalcification) or decay can appear. These marks can be permanent.
- **Gum problems.** Without excellent brushing, gums can swell or shrink back (recession). These changes can be permanent, and recession can leave small dark triangles between teeth.
- **Root shortening.** The tips of the roots normally shorten slightly during treatment (root resorption). In a healthy mouth this causes no long-term harm. Occasionally it is more than normal. This is hard to predict, and treatment may need to stop early, accepting a compromise. You may need extra X-rays to check.
- **Teeth moving back (relapse).** Teeth tend to move back towards where they started, especially if they were very crowded or twisted. Retainers help prevent this, so it is vital to wear them as instructed.
- **A tooth that will not move.** Very rarely, a tooth is fused to the bone and cannot be moved. If this happens we will explain any change to the plan, such as different extractions or accepting a compromise result.
- **Jaw growth.** Growth is outside the orthodontist's control. Occasionally a jaw does not keep growing as expected, and the plan may need to change. This may mean referral to hospital for further treatment.
- **A tooth losing its nerve.** Rarely, a tooth may die during treatment. An undetected dead tooth can cause pain or infection and may need root canal treatment or removal.

What we **need from you**

- **Follow our advice.** Your result depends on you. Listen to the advice at each visit. If you are given elastics, wear them for the hours we ask every day, or you may not get the best result.
- **Keep your teeth and brace clean.** Brush well every day. Keep sweets and fizzy drinks to mealtimes. If oral hygiene is not good enough, treatment may be stopped early with a compromise result (for example, gaps left), and you will not qualify for another course of health service treatment.
- **Come to every appointment.** Braces need regular adjustment, usually every 6 to 8 weeks. If you need to change an appointment, please give at least 24 hours' notice.
- **Tell us about breakages quickly.** Broken or bent wires slow treatment and can hurt your mouth. If your brace is loose, broken or painful, contact the practice to arrange a repair as soon as possible.

- **Retainers are for life.** After treatment you will need to keep seeing your regular dentist. Replacement retainers are not funded by the health service.

Good **to know**

- Missed appointments, breakages and not following advice can all make treatment take longer and affect the result.
- Some treatment may be carried out by trainee orthodontic therapists.
- If your care has to move to another clinic, it is likely to cost more there, and payment terms, the treatment plan or the brace may change.

Questions **or problems?**

Clinic name	Heathwood House	**Phone**	028 3870 2623
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Opening hours	Mon–Thu 8am–5pm; Fri 8am–4pm (usually closed 1–2pm)		

Please have your name and date of birth ready when you contact us.