

Are My Teeth Shifting?

Written by Keith R. Dobrin, DMD, MBA

“But I had braces when I was younger! What do you mean my teeth are going to shift throughout my life?” Just when you thought aging couldn't get any worse, boom! Your lower front teeth start crowding up. That's a little dramatic but the truth is, it takes some effort to keep those teeth looking good as you get older, just like any other part of the body. By that I mean not only seeing the dentist for routine exams and cleanings every 6 months, but you should also make time for the orthodontist, at least yearly and even as an adult after you have had orthodontic treatment.

As a large family practice, we often treat adolescent patients either prior to or alongside their parents. We live in esthetically conscious times (albeit with masks in public) and teeth are often the first thing we notice - that goes for both in-person as well as the more likely remote conversation via Zoom call. That being said, more and more adults are pursuing treatment to create not only beautiful but more importantly healthy smiles with teeth that are easier to clean and maintain. Crowding of teeth prevents optimal cleaning and that will also affect gum health. So why does it happen? Well, it is true that we are constantly growing and our bones are remodeling, especially the lower anterior jaw. Once teeth have a chance to cross over one another it becomes a domino effect and there is no looking back. That's where we, the orthodontists, come in. The sooner the better, and those in the sooner category often take less treatment time to correct. Anticipated shifting of teeth is another reason we will commonly place a fixed permanent retainer behind the lower six front teeth (the most likely teeth to shift) to maintain their positions and prevent future shifting after we have resolved the concerns. The fixed retainer is small, smooth, and inconspicuous, and you forget that it is even there soon after it is placed. Patients truly value this type of retainer and we are always there for follow up care and regular maintenance checks. However, crowding isn't the only condition we see from adult patients who may or may not have been treated in the past - sometimes we will even see spacing, for example between the upper front teeth. That can be caused by not wearing a retainer nightly or at least a few nights per week even years after treatment or it can also be the result of shifting of the lower teeth creating an imperfect bite.

We find that successful treatment and compliance with retainers avoids these situations and leaves you with the smile you were looking for when you first started out.

At our office, Bancroft Dobrin Orthodontics, we treat adults with both Invisalign and braces alike, including the esthetic clear braces to fix the shifts that may have affected your smile. Don't hesitate to call for a complimentary consultation for us to evaluate the situation - no concern is too big, nor too small. We see it all and we strive for perfection. And don't forget, should you ever feel embarrassed as you consider going through treatment as an adult, always remember these two things:

1. You are never too old to create a healthy smile, and
2. You'll be wearing a mask for at least the time being, so why not come out of this pandemic looking and feeling better than ever!

Wishing you all the best from your neighbors, the Bancroft Dobrin Orthodontics team. Stay healthy Ramsey!

Dr. Keith Dobrin (from *Bancroft Dobrin Orthodontics* and *XtraOrdinary Smiles Orthodontics*) is a recognized orthodontic specialist with a degree in Advanced Education in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics. His research on braces adhering to teeth has been published, and given his experience and expertise, he has been selected to test various orthodontic products from national and international companies. Schedule your complimentary consultation appointment today!