



Orthodontic treatment can offer numerous benefits that go beyond just achieving a beautiful smile. Improving oral health, confidence and function - for most patients, orthodontic treatment is an overwhelmingly positive experience.

Treatment is not entirely risk-free however, and whilst the overwhelming majority of patients complete treatment successfully and safely, unfortunately, there are instances where continuing orthodontic treatment can result in damage to the oral health. These include issues with:

- 1. Oral Hygiene**
- 2. Appliance Breakages**
- 3. Missed Appointments**
- 4. Compliance with Prescribed Therapy**

When our team identifies a patient deemed at risk of harm, the supervising orthodontist may decide that it is best to terminate treatment early in order to reduce these risks.

## ORAL HYGIENE

The maintenance of excellent oral hygiene is mandatory for those undergoing orthodontic treatment. We offer all patients a “*Windmill Care Pack*” which has all the hygiene aids required to maintain an excellent standard of cleaning throughout treatment. Our expert team will provide in-depth advice and demonstration of how to clean your teeth effectively when we fit your braces, and our website has a range of resources to help support your care at home:

<https://www.windmillorthodontics.com/resources/maintaining-oral-health-during-orthodontic-treatment>

It is important that you follow these care instructions to ensure **SAFE** treatment and maintenance of overall oral health. Without this additional care, food particles and plaque accumulation around the brackets and wires can lead to irreversible marks and stains and/or cavities on the teeth, and cause gum inflammation/disease.



To minimise these risks, our clinicians will continuously monitor and assess your oral hygiene and provide you with an “*S.B.U. score*” at each visit.

### **S** – Safe levels of oral hygiene

- Great work!
- Your treatment can proceed safely and as planned

### **B** – Borderline levels of oral hygiene

- A little extra work is required to proceed with treatment safely
- We will reiterate warnings re. irreversible damage and provide advice and instruction to improve

### **U** – Unsafe levels of oral hygiene

- It is not safe to continue your treatment
- Our team will arrange a review with your supervising orthodontist,
- We will reiterate warnings re. irreversible damage and provide advice and instruction to improve
- We will warn of the possibility of abandoning treatment early

## APPLIANCE BREAKAGES

Fixed braces are bonded (*glued*) to the teeth securely so that they are not dislodged by the forces of mastication (*chewing*). Although generally avoidable, hard or sticky food, or habits such as biting pens or fingernails can put extreme pressure on the brackets and wires causing them to break.

Repeated or unresolved breakages can result in unplanned movements and damage to tooth enamel meaning that orthodontic treatment may no longer be considered **SAFE**. In addition, frequent breakages, and the additional resources and appointments that are required to repair them can result in extended treatments and slower progress. This does not represent a fair use of NHS resources as it increases waiting times for other patients.



Of course, occasionally accidents do happen, and in the event of appliance breakage, we would encourage you to report the problem via our dedicated online portal:

<https://www.windmillorthodontics.com/brokenbraces>

Our team will review the problem and contact you within 24 business hours to schedule a repair appointment if required and provide advice and strategies to avoid similar issues in the future. We record the number of appliance breakages during each course of treatment, and if the orthodontic team identify an unusually high number of breakages and/or treatment is deemed to be not progressing as expected, an appointment will be arranged with the supervising orthodontist to review your case and potentially make the decision to terminate treatment early in order to ensure **SAFE** and fair care for all.

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS

For orthodontic treatment to progress as planned it is important to attend all your scheduled appointments. When we undertake your initial assessment, we will ask for a mobile phone number and an additional emergency contact number, as well as an email address. This allows to send automated text reminders about your upcoming visits and means that we can contact you should we need to make any changes to your appointment schedule.

If you realise that you cannot attend your scheduled appointment, it is important to contact us as soon as possible to rearrange, giving us at least 48 hours' notice so that we can offer your appointment to another patient. If you are unable to reach us on the telephone during office hours, please email:

[windmilladmin@riverdalehealthcare.com](mailto:windmilladmin@riverdalehealthcare.com)

Regular orthodontic appointments are needed for adjusting the appliances and monitoring progress. Missing appointments is not **SAFE** as it can stop or slow down the movement of teeth, often extending the course of treatment, and requiring additional clinical time to correct the issues that arose during the missed period. Wasted clinical time does not represent a fair use of NHS resources as it increases the waiting times for other patients.

If you fail to give us notice of a missed appointment, we will record the absence as *"was not brought"* or *"did not attend"*. Dental professionals have a duty of care to all patients, including safeguarding children.

We will always try to contact you to re-arrange missed appointments, however, multiple missed appointments can indicate a potential safeguarding concern, and we are required to follow established procedures to assess the situation and ensure patient safety. This may involve contacting the referring dentist, general medical practitioner, carer / support service, or involving social services if required.

Windmill Orthodontics cannot be responsible for the outcome of unsupervised orthodontic treatment. In order to ensure that NHS resources are used appropriately, your supervising orthodontist will review your case if you miss multiple consecutive appointments or fail to contact the practice for an extended period and may make the decision to discharge you on the assumption that you have decided to abandon treatment or have sought care elsewhere.



## COMPLIANCE WITH PRESCRIBED THERAPY

Your Orthodontist will provide a bespoke treatment plan to correct your bite and improve your smile. In order for treatment to be **SAFE** and effective, it is vitally important to follow the Orthodontists instructions carefully. If you do not follow the Orthodontist's instruction, treatment is likely to take longer than necessary, meaning more appointments are required – which does not represent a fair use of NHS resources. Similarly, inefficient orthodontic treatment may mean that patients are exposed to the risks of orthodontic treatment for prolonged periods, without the potential to experience all of the benefits. This means it may not be **SAFE** to allow treatment to continue, and your Orthodontist may decide to terminate your treatment early.

Examples of situations which may mean your Orthodontist takes the decision your treatment early include failure to:

- **Comply with functional appliance (Twin Block) therapy**
- **Use elastic auxiliaries effectively**
- **Wear clear aligners for 22 hours per day**
- **Send regular scans using the Dental Monitoring equipment provided (not applicable to all)**
- **Wear removable retainers regularly, or maintain fixed retainers intact**
- **Attend appointments on time**
- **Cancel appointments within the required notice period**