



Orthodontic Records What They Are and What to Expect

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Making the decision to visit an orthodontist is a smart move. An orthodontist is expertly trained in the area of straightening teeth. By making the choice to undergo orthodontic treatment, you will reap a list of benefits. From having a beautiful, straight smile to helping to avoid jaw, chewing and even speech problems, orthodontic treatment builds a strong foundation for the teeth and can have long term esthetic and health benefits. But what most people are not aware of is that all proper orthodontic treatment starts with a records process.

Taking Records

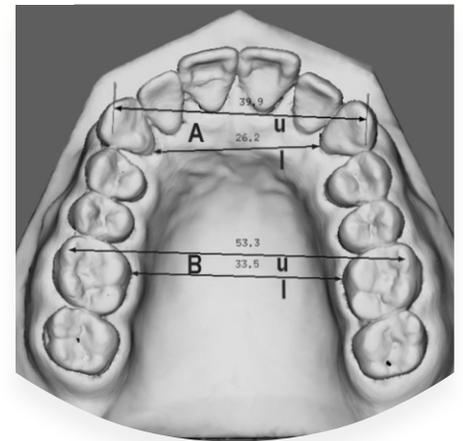
When you first meet with an orthodontist, you may not know whether you need treatment.

Once it is determined that you could benefit from treatment, the next step is for orthodontic records to be created. Just like a home builder begins with blueprints, an orthodontist needs records, of your teeth, jaw, face and underlying structures. With those in hand, your orthodontist is then able to determine an effective treatment plan to help you achieve the results that you are looking for.

So, just how are orthodontic records taken? It's actually much easier than you may be thinking. During your records appointment,

a series of measurements will be taken, so that the orthodontist has the information needed to devise the right custom plan for you. The mission of an orthodontist is to bring the teeth, lips and jaw into proper alignment, making the gathering of current patient records a key component of the process. Some of the records that you can expect to be taken include:

Study Models, Bite and Facial Measurements. There will be dental impressions, bite and facial measurements will be taken of your teeth at your records appointment. Dental impressions, are made by having a gel-like material placed over the teeth and allowing it to set. From the dental impressions, plaster replicas will be made. These molds of your teeth play an important role in helping the orthodontist to evaluate the current positioning of your teeth, as well as predict their future placement following treatment. These molds and measurements allow your orthodontist to examine your teeth and bite more thoroughly than is possible by simply looking in your mouth. Additionally, there will be measurements taken to relate study models to your face and give us an accurate replica of your bite.



The accuracy of your bite is critical and the measurements, provide clues as to how to correct it.

Radiographs. At your records appointment, you can expect to have a series of radiographs (x-rays) taken. These x-rays include a panoramic view which will provide a look at both the top and bottom teeth together on one film. These are especially important for children and adolescents because they will show developing teeth that are not yet visible, giving the orthodontist the ability to predict where they will erupt by showing the position, direction, and number of growing teeth within the jaw. It is also important for adults because it will show the current jaw and bone health, and whether there are any missing or impacted teeth. A full series of x-rays

taken on an adult allows the orthodontist to closely evaluate the health of each tooth. Additional x-rays taken include the lateral cephalometric radiograph, or ceph, which plays an important role in helping the orthodontist to determine current jaw position relative to one another and relative to the face. The direction of growth can reveal the need for interceptive treatment to help modify the direction and extent of growth. This radiograph is somewhat unique to orthodontic specialists and there is a good chance this will be your first lateral cephalometric radiograph, as general dentists do not routinely take these x-rays.

Photographs. Photos will be taken of the inside and outside of your mouth. The facial photographs record the facial proportions and relationships while photographs inside the mouth detail the



bite, tooth positions and gums. They will also become part of your permanent patient record and they are fun to review before and after results when your new smile is finished.

During your records appointment, you should feel comfortable enough to ask any questions that you may have. You will spend approximately 45 minutes with both a treatment coordinator and an orthodontic assistant during your records appointment. Whether you take a list of questions with you that you would like to have answered, or you think of them on

the spot, the records appointment is a great time to get them all addressed.

Devising a Plan

All of the diagnostic records taken during your appointment are instrumental in helping the orthodontist devise the most effective and efficient treatment plan possible. They are the blueprints, or study aide, that will be used to determine everything from your current jaw and teeth position, to which course of treatment will provide the best route to achieving straight teeth and a health bite.

The more tools the orthodontist has for learning about your current situation, the more effective a treatment plan they can then devise. Think of the time that you put into your records appointment as a crucial stop along the way to the smile you want. Like any journey, it helps to have a detailed map, so that you know where you are going and the best way to get there!

Getting Your Questions Answered

It's very common for parents and their children to have additional questions beyond the initial consultation. Between the anxiety of setting up the visit to sitting in an orthodontist's chair to the variety of preliminary and post-visit issues that have to be dealt with, it's easy to get overwhelmed. That's why modern orthodontists make it extremely simple for you to get the answers you need in a way that's simplest for you.

Here are just some of the ways you can get your questions answered in your way – and right on time:

Website: www.delurgioandblom.com
The practice website features a variety of patient resources including full explanations of every procedure, an interactive map with driving directions, a patient information section and several ways to get in touch with the office if you don't find what you're looking for.



Braces.org: The website of the American Association of Orthodontists offers a wide range of articles and patient information for your records prior to and during orthodontic treatment. The orthodontist locator is a popular feature to help you find a specialist close to home. Remember, only orthodontists can belong to the American Association of Orthodontists, so when you visit www.braces.org you know you're receiving accurate, state-of-the-art information regarding tooth and jaw alignment.



About the Author

Dr. DeLurgio was voted one of Sacramento's "Top Orthodontists" in 2011-2016 by a survey of Sacramento dentists published in the Sacramento Magazine. When not immersed in treating her patients, Dr. DeLurgio enjoys spending time with her husband, Daniel, traveling and exploring the outdoors.