

A SMILE WORTHWHILE

From the gaudy METAL wire and rubber band design to today's BARELY visible contraptions, *orthodontic* braces have gone a LONG way to give you that perfectly aligned set of PEARLY whites



beautiful smile makes a great impression and teeth are certainly in the fore of making one. But as we grow older, maintaining teeth takes more than the regular brushing and flossing. Tooth

whitening, crowns, veneers, inlays, onlays, bridges—the options are plenty when it comes to caring for our chompers. And braces—that über-unflattering metal wire and rubber band contraption for realigning crooked teeth and closing gaps—are no exception, even if it means getting one later than usual in life.

In the last decade or so, seeing grown adults (some even in their mid-age years) flashing some metal or pulling their lips gingerly over wired teeth after smiling no longer raises eyebrows. Okay, maybe some do. Fortunately, recent technological advances have made orthodontic treatment faster, more comfortable, less subtle (read: no flashy metal) and more effective in achieving improved dental appearance and function.

WIRED BENEFITS

While corrective and preventive work is ideally performed when permanent teeth have just come out, almost anyone, regardless of age, can undergo orthodontic treatment. "As long as the teeth, gums and supporting bones are healthy," adds Dr. Jose Manuel Rivera, licensed orthodontist and current president of the Association of Philippine Orthodontists (APO).

According to him, "When teeth are correctly aligned, dental decay is less likely to occur. The proper treatment also relieves the extra strain on gums and bones caused by teeth that do not fit well, thus averting periodontal disease and



tooth loss. Well-fitting or aligned teeth influence the everyday functions like speaking and chewing. The teeth are easier to keep clean and will actually last longer."

"Well-fitting or **ALIGNED TEETH** influence the everyday functions like speaking and **CHEWING**"

BRACE YOURSELF

Nobody wants to be called "metalmouth" and thankfully there are different alternatives that enable patients to undergo orthodontic treatment with minimal discomfort and requiring just as much, if not less, maintenance. A first option is InvisAlign or bracket-less treatment, a technique that uses a series of custom-made plastic aligners or trays pressing directly on the teeth rather than the usual series of wires pressing against brackets to transfer pressure on the teeth. Because it's changed every month or two, it can cost two to three times more than the conventional orthodontic treatment.

Second is the use of Self-Ligating Brackets, touted by experts as the future of orthodontics. It's frictionless because





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In her 5 year career, Ms. Chon rose from the ranks quickly. She acquired the title of Style Director through and her uncompromising passion for her craft and her extensive trainings abroad. Aside from hair dressing, Ms. Chon is also a licensed Scalp Therapist and a graduate of Nail Art Course.

HEALTH

each bracket has a "door" that opens and closes, eliminating the need for elastic or metal "ties" and allowing the wire inside more freedom to move. Micro-implants placed within the bone as anchorage complete the set. The technique makes tooth movement faster and more comfortable for the patient since less force is needed.

Finally, there's the Micro-Implant Anchorage. Mini screws are attached to the bone to help move teeth more efficiently. This type of treatment eliminates the need for patients to wear headgear, decreases overall treatment time and occasionally permits orthodontic treatments previously thought to be impossible without surgery.

TEETH are among the first indicators of aging. A smile can **SHOW** MORE "wisdom" than you're willing to reveal



CHECK LIST

Those who are seeking orthodontic treatment should make sure that their orthodontist is qualified. Dr. Rivera warns, "Any dentist can 'attach' braces and move a tooth to start treatment. But the success of the treatment is crucial... In the hands of an unqualified or under/qualified professional, more harm than good is likely to occur. I have personally done a lot of work on patients who have sought my help to correct or repair the damage done on their teeth as a result."

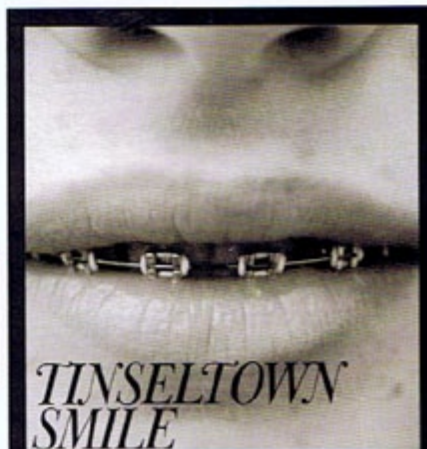
Do the usual research you would for any medical treatment. Check for a certification that shows that the professional has been accredited by the Board of Dentistry of the Professional Regulation Commission. "To prevent any misdiagnosis, dental trauma or mistakes in treatment plans, those seeking to get orthodontic treatment should check the dentist's academic credentials, training and experience, which should have been gained from a university-based or two-year graduate program, clinically-oriented preceptorships and short seminars," adds Dr. Rivera.

GLEAMING BEAM

Experts have confirmed that teeth are among the first indicators of aging. So even if you have wrinkles Botox-ed-off, a

smile can show more "wisdom" than you are willing to reveal. With the latest in technology, there are hardly any hurdles left in the pursuit of looking good, especially when it concerns your smile. And while dental treatments involve costs, remember that short cuts can yield more disasters than ideal results. In the end, no matter how costly or embarrassing it can be to don a set of grills (metallic, ceramic or other), what's most important is the end-product: a gorgeous smile carried by someone with an increased positive outlook and self-esteem.

For more information on orthodontic treatments, visit <apo.com.ph>.



These top celebrities actually went through the treatment right before the public's scrutinizing eyes:

• **Gwen Stefani** - had metal braces during the height of her ska band, No Doubt

• **Tom Cruise** - wore InvisAlign while filming his movie Minority Report

• **Fantasia Barrino** - to look like the winner she is, she wore braces after winning American Idol in 2005

• **Cher** - didn't accept her Best Actress Daniello Award in Italy in 1988 because she was at home waiting for her braces to be removed

• **Whoopi Goldberg** - wore braces as an adult and even dated her orthodontist!

• **Nicholas Cage** - wore a bottom brace in 2003

