

# Mississauga Dental Specialists

*Braces Invisalign Teeth Gums & Implants*

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## Orthodontic Dictionary – Common Terms

The following are the most commonly used terms in orthodontics. If you have any questions about orthodontics or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact our office.

**Anterior Teeth:** The upper and lower six front teeth on each arch.

**Appliance:** Any orthodontic device which moves or retains teeth. Appliances may also alter the positioning of the jaw.

**Arch:** The entire upper or lower jaw.

**Archwire:** The metal wire that connects orthodontic brackets. This wire guides the teeth into their new alignment.

**Band with bracket:** Metal bands (rings) that are generally cemented around the back teeth.

**Braces:** Fixed orthodontic appliances designed to align teeth.

**Brackets:** The tiny metal, ceramic or clear brackets that are affixed to each individual tooth on the arch.

**Brushing:** This is a crucial part of home dental care. Orthodontists recommend those wearing braces to brush after every meal and snack to eliminate bacteria and plaque.

**Buccal:** The outer (cheek) side of posterior teeth in the lower and upper arches.

**Cephalometric Radiograph:** A side X-ray of the face and head used to show growth and development.

**Chain:** Elastics connected together and placed around the brackets to stabilize the archwire and gently close spaces.

**Class I Malocclusion:** Molars are correctly aligned, but there is an anterior/posterior cross-bite, an open-bite or overcrowding on the arches.

**Class II Malocclusion:** Also known as an overbite. The upper front teeth are positioned further forward than the lower teeth.

**Class III Malocclusion:** Also known as an under-bite. The lower front teeth are positioned further forward than the upper front teeth.

**Closed Bite:** The upper front teeth completely overlap the bottom teeth causing a deep overbite.

**Congenitally Missing Teeth:** Some permanent teeth fail to develop and erupt due to genetic factors.

**Crossbite:** A malocclusion in which the upper back teeth bite inside or outside the lower back teeth, or the lower front teeth bite in front of the upper front teeth.

**De-banding:** The removal of orthodontic bands from the teeth.

**De-bonding:** The removal of affixed orthodontic brackets from the teeth.

**Diagnostic Records:** Records used to assess, plan and implement treatments. These records usually include medical and dental history, radiographs, panoramic radiographs, bite molds and intraoral/extraoral photographs.

**Digital Radiograph:** Digital X-rays of the teeth which can be viewed, stored, and transmitted via computer.

**Elastics:** Some braces may require that elastic rubber bands be attached to exert additional pressure to an individual tooth or a group of teeth.

**Eruption:** The way in which teeth surface through the gums inside the mouth.

**Fixed Orthodontic Appliances:** Orthodontic appliances which are affixed to the teeth by the orthodontist and cannot be removed by the patient.

**Flossing:** An essential part of home care that removes debris and plaque from above and below the gum line.

**Functional Appliances:** Orthodontic appliances that use the muscle movement created by swallowing, eating and speaking to gently move and align the teeth and jaws.

**Gingiva:** The gums and soft tissue around the teeth.

**Headgear:** A removable appliance comprised of a brace and external archwire. This device modifies growth and promotes tooth movement.

**Impressions:** Teeth impressions are taken to allow the orthodontist to see exactly how a patient's teeth fit together.

**Interceptive Treatment:** Treatment performed on children who have a mixture of adult and baby teeth. Early treatment can help reduce the need for major orthodontic treatment in the future.

**Invisalign®:** A newer, removable type of dental aligner that is completely transparent and doesn't interfere with eating because it's removable. Not all patients are candidates for Invisalign®.

**Ligating Modules:** An elastic donut-shaped ring which helps secure the archwire to the bracket.

**Ligation:** Securing the archwire to the brackets.

**Lingual Side:** The side of the teeth (in both arches) that is closest to the tongue.

**Malocclusion:** Literally means “bad bite” in Latin, and refers to teeth that do not fit together correctly.

**Mandible:** The lower jaw.

**Maxilla:** The upper jaw.

**Mouth Guard:** A removable plastic or rubber device that protects teeth and braces from sporting injuries.

**Open Bite:** Upper and lower teeth fail to make contact with each other. This malocclusion is generally classified as anterior or posterior.

**Orthodontics:** The unique branch of dentistry concerned with diagnosing, preventing and correcting malocclusions and jaw irregularities.

**Orthodontist:** A dental specialist who prevents, diagnoses and treats jaw irregularities and malocclusions. Orthodontists must complete two or three additional years of college after dental school and complete a residency program.

**Palatal Expander:** A removable or fixed device designed to expand the palate in order create room on either the upper or lower arch.

**Panoramic Radiograph:** An extraoral (external) X-ray that shows the teeth and jaws.

**Plaque:** The sticky film of saliva, food particles and bacteria that contributes to gum disease and tooth decay.

**Posterior Teeth:** Back teeth.

**Removable Appliance:** An orthodontic brace or device that can be removed at will by the patient. It must be worn for the designated amount of time each day to be effective.

**Separators:** A wire loop or elastic ring placed between the teeth to create room for the subsequent placement of bands or orthodontic appliance.

**Space Maintainer:** A fixed appliance used to hold space for permanent (adult) tooth. This is usually used when a baby tooth has been lost earlier than anticipated.

**Wax:** Orthodontic relief wax is a home care remedy used to alleviate irritations caused by braces.

**Wires:** Attached to the brackets to gently move the teeth into proper alignment.