

Parent's Guide to Braces

AO ADVANCED
ORTHODONTICS
by Dr. Larrabee

1810 S Crismon Rd | Suite 183
Mesa, AZ 85209
Tel: (480) 357 4900

www.aosmiles.com



BRACES 101

The Breakdown

What are braces?

Braces are a treatment device used in orthodontics to help align and straighten teeth. Traditional braces consisted of metal brackets with colored rubber bands used to correct teeth in children and adults. Today's high-tech, self-ligating braces are far more discrete and do not require the regular tightening process of traditional braces; making the treatment process more comfortable and efficient.

Why might your child need braces?

Braces are often recommended by your dentist to help correct bite, crowding/spacing, impacted teeth and other potential complications that are best suited for orthodontic care.

While braces often begin for structural or cosmetic reasons the confidence that braces treatment provides in the long-run is invaluable. We want your child (and you) to be able to smile with confidence

and pride – something that a corrected smile brings to each and every braces patient.

When should my child get braces?

It is recommended by The American Association of Orthodontics that children be seen by an orthodontist by the age of 7. Even though your child visits an orthodontist, it could be months or years before treatment actually needs to take place. The benefit of going early is to assess any issues with jaw growth, teeth bite, etc. This is extremely important as traumatic positions can permanently damage adult teeth and orthopedic correction becomes far more difficult to achieve.

Are braces just for kids?

Absolutely not! If you're reading this with your child in mind but are also interested in adult braces or alternative treatments like Invisalign, [lets chat!](#)



DO YOUR RESEARCH

Choosing the Orthodontist that's Right for You

You will spend a lot of time visiting your orthodontist throughout your child's braces treatment. It is important to research and ask questions to make sure that you are getting the proper treatment from someone both you and your child feel comfortable with. We recommend [scheduling a consultation](#) to get a feel for the location and staff and to get your questions answered most effectively.

5 Questions to Ask Your (Potential) Orthodontist

1. What treatment options do they offer?

You may or may not already know what type of treatment your child wants or needs. However, understanding what is available to you (or more importantly, not-available) is valuable. You will want to look for an orthodontist that offers high-tech braces over traditional braces and that also offers options for Invisalign Teen. Sometimes a smile is actually better treated with Invisalign. If so, this will be determined in your early visits. Make sure that your future orthodontist is willing to take the time to explain the options and their differences.

2. Are they a specialist?

When receiving advice and orthodontic treatment, you will want to make sure that you are speaking with an orthodontic specialist. All orthodontists are dentists but only a small fraction of dentists are orthodontists. Orthodontists have taken on several years of additional education and training to learn the proper skills associated with consulting and conducting orthodontic treatment. You will also want to understand their goals of treatment for your child (or yourself) and see photo testimonials of all the smiles they've created.

3. Are they using the latest technology?

It is important to make sure that your orthodontist is using the latest in sterilization, braces, Invisalign and Accelident to minimize soreness and shorten treatment time. Orthodontists using 3D imaging is a huge bonus as well. According to [American Journal of Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopedics](#), 1 in 5 diagnosis are different with the extra information that these images can provide. This results in more effective treatment and even better results.

4. Does their office have a great reputation?

What others are saying about your orthodontic office speaks volumes of the doctor, staff and treatment success. Take some time to research feedback from past patients on platforms such as Google, Yelp, and Facebook. Look on their website for information on awards, best of nominations and other credibility factors. If no one is talking about your orthodontist or if they are talking poorly about their services or staff, hang your red flag high and keep searching.

5. Do they offer payment plans?

It's no secret that braces and other orthodontic treatment can be costly. While we strongly believe that corrections to your smile are without-a-doubt worth the expense, it's important to make sure that your orthodontist accepts your insurance and that there are payment plans available that fit your family's needs before you make the financial commitment.

Meet Advanced Orthodontics & Dr. Larrabee

Dr. Benjamin Larrabee, DDS

Voted "Best Orthodontist" from AZ Foothills Magazine 3 years in a row and "Top Doc" by his peers, Dr. Benjamin Larrabee is passionate about creating healthy smiles across the Valley, using the latest in orthodontic technology. He finished in the top 5% of his class at University of Michigan dental school and received his Masters in Orthodontics from Marquette University. After completing his residency in 2003, Dr. Larrabee practiced in Chicago, before moving to Arizona in 2006, where he has built a notable practice, recognized across the Valley. At Advanced Orthodontics, he has assembled a team of individuals who are excited to bring continual education, training, skills and technology to its practice. Dr. Larrabee, his wife and their three children love living the Valley of the Sun. He is dedicated to the community and supports several programs, including the United Way Food Bank and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America.

"But he looks so young!"

This is Dr. Larrabee's favorite compliment and one we hear often from those concerned that age equates to skill-level. Rest assured, Dr. Larrabee has been

practicing in the Valley for over 10 years. His young-looks can be attributed to completing undergrad in 3 years (instead of 4), completing dental school and choosing an accelerated 2-year Master's Residency. That, and good genetics from his sweet mother!

Advanced Orthodontics

Advanced Orthodontics is located in Mesa, Arizona and offers treatment to patients of all ages, all across the Valley. Our boutique office environment is tailored to make your treatment process as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. We offer iPads for gaming, flat screen TVs above your chair and in the lobby, a photo booth, giant candy wall, kids club center and warm cookies after every visit. Not to worry, this unique office environment is backed by a skilled and talented doctor, professional and friendly staff, flexible financial plans, advanced treatment options, extended office hours and an incredible reputation.



Schedule a Consultation

Scheduling an initial consultation for your child is easy and risk free. Simply go to our website and fill out the contact form or call our office to [schedule your FREE consultation.](#)



ANSWERING THEIR QUESTIONS

How to Talk to your Child about Braces

Some kids will be excited about braces and others may be hesitant about the process. Spending time talking to your child about why braces are important for them, what to expect during treatment and what kind of results they will see is an important step for parents to take. Aside from growth correction, braces should bring your child confidence in their smile and themselves. Getting them involved in the process and answering their questions along the way will help build this confidence and understanding early on. Advanced Orthodontics will help answer any questions you and your child may have during your initial visit, but we want to equip you for conversations that may arise at home as well.

5 Commonly Asked Questions:

1. Do they hurt?

Advanced Orthodontics uses high-tech braces (and Invisalign) treatment to help make sure that pain is very minimal. There may be some mild discomfort

after the initial bonding appointment and as your teeth begin to shift, but nothing that over-the-counter Tylenol can't kick. Since we use a low-force system, there is NO tightening associated with your braces treatment (like traditional braces). Believe it or not, your teeth are able to naturally move more optimally without this tightening practice. WIN WIN.

2. How long will I have them?

Every patient is unique and treatment time is dependent on your particular case. On average, you will need to have braces for 1-2 years and will wear a retainer following.

3. Do I get to choose colors?

Dr. Larrabee uses the latest in high-tech braces to allow you to get color options but in a very hygienic way (unlike some traditional braces). The brackets we use help to minimize soreness and minimize your visits to every 10 weeks – putting colors underneath the entire wire with fun-colored elastics to make

your bite fit great. Traditional braces require color on each brace which requires visits every 4-6 weeks to change. Want to rock different shaped brackets? Ask Dr. Larrabee about Wild Smiles and options for footballs, stars, flowers and more.

4. What if I get made fun of?

While you may be the first, we can almost guarantee that you won't be the only one in your class, group of friends, etc. that has braces. Our braces are designed to be far less noticeable and bulky than they were in your parent's days and the days of being called "metal mouth" are long gone. Rock those braces with confidence and you don't have to worry about a thing.

PARENT NOTE: if your child is not concerned about what others might think, we'd advise not discussing this topic unless it becomes an issue. We want to avoid giving them additional worries and insecurities if they don't already exist.

5. Can I still participate in sports and other activities?

It may take a few days to get used to your new braces, but you should be able to continue participating in sports, playing musical instruments and enjoying activities as normal throughout your treatment.





GETTING STARTED

What to Expect During your Initial Consultation

During your initial visit, you and your child will meet with Dr. Larrabee in our open room, boutique office. Once you have gotten acquainted, he will take 3D imaging scans free of charge in order to assess your growth and development. Following scans and evaluation, Dr. Larrabee will be able to discuss with you your child's potential need for orthodontic care. Often times, Advanced Orthodontics will see patients for 4-6 years of FREE checkups and wellness visits before braces are deemed necessary. Your child can join our Super Cool Kids Club as early as your initial visit and start collecting Larrabee Loot to be used in our rewards center. A tour of our full facility will be given during your visit to help you and your child get acquainted.

NOTE: No dental work or referral is needed before your consult with Advanced Orthodontics. Often times we can help both the patient and your dentists with creating a game plan that works best for you and helps to eliminate future dental work.

What is 3D Imaging?

3D Imaging not only helps Dr. Larrabee diagnose completely and accurately, it also allows him to find the ideal time for wisdom teeth removal – making it a less expensive and less invasive procedure for the patient. **Advanced Orthodontics is one of the few places in the Valley that offers 3D Imaging free of charge for their patients.**



GETTING BRACES

What to Expect During the Treatment Process

Understanding the Treatment process

Following the initial treatment of self-ligating braces or Invisalign your visits will extend to every 10-12 weeks (vs. 4-6 weeks with traditional braces). Dr. Larrabee will assess your progress, make adjustments if necessary and discuss any necessary updates with you and your child.

We have flexible office hours that help accommodate for before or after school appointments. Office hours are available as early as 7AM for early risers and as late at 7PM to allow for after school/work flexibility. Advanced Orthodontics' schedule is made to make appointments easy on the child but also the parent or adult going through treatment alongside them.

Kids Club & Larrabee Loot

Advanced Orthodontics' Super Cool Kids Club is a way for our younger patients to earn "Larrabee Loot" (rewards points) to be cashed in for awesome prizes or gift cards to spend in our Prize Cabinet or even online!

By becoming a patient, you are automatically enrolled in our Super Cool Kids Club and will be issued a membership card. Bring this membership card to every appointment to gain Larrabee Loot for good dental hygiene, rocking your AO t-shirt and other good progress items.



LET'S TALK MONEY

The Scoop on Insurance & Payment Plans

Insurance Options

Before you begin treatment, it is important to understand your insurance coverage. You can speak with one of our talented treatment professionals on staff and/or your insurance company to make sure that you understand your options and coverage.

Understanding Payment Plans

The average cost of high-tech braces in 2016 is between \$4000 - \$8000. However, the cost of braces varies based on each individual's treatment needs. Advanced Orthodontics staff will work closely with you and your insurance company to work out a financial payment plan ideal for your family. The majority of our plans are done in-house with no interest to help make your smile design possible.



STICKING TO THE RULES

How to Get your Braces Off in Record Time

Brushing & Flossing

Maintaining a regular brushing and flossing schedule is important for general dental hygiene. The importance of these items is even more magnified when you have braces. Make sure you brush your teeth after every meal and floss at least once a day. Choosing a toothpaste with fluoride will also help to prevent cavities.

If using a regular toothbrush, position the bristles to be angled upwards and downwards to get a good clean over your braces. Brush the outer side of your teeth in a circular motion, remembering to remove any plaque build up along the gum line. Follow this process with the inside and back of teeth as well.

Traditional flossing can be achieved with braces. You will be shown how to achieve this technique in your treatment process. Floss picks or water picks are helpful as well.

Avoid Hard, Sticky & Tough Foods

The first week of eating with braces can be challenging as it's a change in your routine. Be sure to avoid foods that are hard, sticky or tough. Sticking to foods that are softer and easier to chew will help make you more comfortable during this early stage. Bananas, oatmeal, pancakes, soups, pasta, smoothies and ice cream are some of our favorite suggestions.

This will get easier and more comfortable with time. Certain foods have a tendency to break your braces – please avoid these and foods like them:

Hard: apples, carrots, ice, nuts, chips

Sticky: caramel, tootsie rolls, taffy

Tough: bagels, pizza crust, beef jerky

Advanced Orthodontics doesn't use big bulky bands on the back teeth which allows you to have more of the foods you like during treatment. Sugar free gum and even popcorn are perfectly fine to enjoy during treatment! As long as you continue to avoid the hard, sticky, tough items you should be good. [Click here](#) for some of our favorite braces friendly meal ideas.

Continue with your routine dentist visits

You will need to continue seeing your primary dentist every 6 months for semi-annual cleaning appointments. Regular dental hygiene is more important than ever when undergoing braces treatment.

Attend all follow up appointments

To make sure you get your braces off in record time, you must attend your follow up appointments every 10-12 weeks. This will help Dr. Larrabee assess your progress, make adjustments and offer advice on how to accelerate the process when possible.



LIFE WITH BRACES

Basic Troubleshooting

Sensitivity

As your teeth start moving to the correct position with braces or Invisalign it is normal to have some soreness and sensitivity. To help alleviate soreness, you can rinse your mouth with a warm salt-water solution or take over-the-counter Tylenol. For the first week or so, your braces may feel like they are rubbing or irritating your mouth – if so simply place some dental wax to cover the problem (wax is available at our office or any of your favorite drugstores).

How to Use Dental Wax

Break off a small amount of wax and roll it in your fingers until it warms and softens. Then firmly press the softened wax against the area of the braces that is protruding or broken. Once placed, it will cover sharp edges and stabilize loose pieces of wire or bracket.

Broken Brace

Accidents happen. Sometimes a tooth simply needs a different preparation for an even better bond of brace. If a brace is loose in very back, it will often slide right off the wire (PLEASE SAVE THE BRACE) or

if it's in the front of your mouth will simply slide on the wire. Place wax on it for comfort, don't let it ruin your Saturday night – it's OK. Simply give us a call to schedule a special appointment to get you fixed up OR if your appointment is in a few days please call us ahead of time so we can make sure to accommodate all the time we need to get you all fixed up.

Pokey Wires

A "Pokey wire" is when the soft flexible wire in the back has fallen out of tube/brace in back and begins to "poke" or irritate you. Sometimes this is caused because your teeth are moving so well. If this happens, don't worry! Try and use tweezers to place back in or simply push in so it's comfortable and add some wax. If poking is in the very back and you can't reach with tweezers, try and use a pencil eraser to push from back forward and often eliminates the pokey wire. If irritation continues, give us a call and we will get you in to help adjust.

Please know we are always here for you. We even have an after office hours on-call pager to get in touch with your needs as soon as possible.



KEEPING THAT PERFECT SMILE

All About Aftercare

Follow up Appointments

Advanced Orthodontics wants you to keep your new, beautiful smile forever, which is why we customize retainers just for you! Dr. Larrabee even sees you for 1 year of FREE retainer checks just to make sure you're doing great. After the first year, you simply come back whenever you need us! Retainers are important to wear to maintain and stabilize your smile.

Retainers

Retainers are appliances that help keep your new beautiful smile in place. Both the type of retainer and the care for them are addressed near the end of your treatment and each patient's retention of new smile is specific to that patient. Your first set of retainers are always included in your treatment at Advanced Orthodontics, as well as retainer appointments, to

make sure your smile is staying gorgeous and healthy. Retainers are customized to meet your treatment goals and are specific to each individual patient.

Younger patients are often concerned about wisdom teeth affecting their smiles post-braces. This is an old wives' tale! As long as you continue wearing your retainer you have nothing to worry about.

You are an AO patient for as long as you need us. Come back and see us whenever you like for retainer check at no charge! Remember retainers are half the battle. As long as you wear your retainers, you will have straight teeth! Our "Save Your Smile" program is also available to help save your smile on (digital) file for life!

KNOWING THE ALTERNATIVES

Invisalign & Acceleident



Invisalign Teen

If your teen is interested and eligible for Invisalign, Dr. Larrabee will discuss this option with you. Invisalign offers a comfortable, metal-free option for improving your smile. Using 3D-technology, Dr. Larrabee develops your custom treatment plan and works closely with Invisalign to create custom clear aligners according to your exact orthodontic needs. These invisible aligners are easily removable, making eating, drinking, brushing and flossing still incredibly convenient. Dr. Larrabee is also an ELITE Provider for Invisalign, not only using the latest technology such as Impression Free iTero Digital Scanning, but also treatment modalities that give amazing results without braces!



Acceleident

Acceleident is a safe, innovative procedure that patients of all ages choose in order to expedite their treatment. Acceleident is used in conjunction with your current orthodontic treatment to help move teeth into their desired position up to 50% faster and helps minimize soreness that's associated with tooth movement. This treatment is primarily geared toward patients that want the least possible soreness with the fastest possible treatment time. Feel free to ask any of our team members how their experience was as they will tell you first hand what a difference it will make!

Schedule a Free Consultation

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