

Statement on orthodontic devices provided directly to the public

The Dental Council has recently become aware that a number of manufacturers are providing orthodontic appliances directly to members of the public outside of the dental surgery setting.

Advice for Patients

The Dental Council would like to remind patients that orthodontics is an invasive dental treatment and it is a recognised dental practice. In order to ensure the best possible outcome, your orthodontic treatment is best undertaken under the supervision of a dentist or a specialist orthodontist for the duration of your care.

Prior to commencing orthodontic treatment, your dentist will take a medical and dental history, carry out a comprehensive examination, often undertake other special investigations, and take x-rays and models. This is to ensure that the treatment being recommended is appropriate, clinically evidence based, and offers the best chance of a successful outcome for the patient. Patients undergoing active orthodontic treatment will attend the dentist or specialist regularly during treating to ensure that their treatment is progressing as planned.

Purchasing an appliance without an appropriate examination or ongoing dental support could compromise your treatment, and possibly your dental health. The Dental Council strongly recommends that patients considering purchasing an appliance directly from a manufacturer discuss their intentions first with their usual dentist to ensure that the planned treatment is appropriate.

Advice for Dentists

The Dental Council is aware that some of the manufacturers state that there are dentists involved at various stages of treatment. The Council would like to remind all registered dentists contracted to work for such manufacturers that you still owe the same duty of care to patients opting to have an appliance manufactured as you would to a patient attending your practice, and that you are still obliged to comply with the Dental Council's Code of Practice regarding Professional Behaviour and Ethical Conduct. This means that you must ensure that:

- the patient has given full informed consent to the treatment, and is aware of the benefits and risks associated with the treatment plan;
- you maintain full and proper records, and that they are properly protected and are available to you at all times; and
- your indemnity insurance covers you to provide remote dentistry.

The Register

You can check that any dentist involved with the manufacturer is registered with the Dental Council if you wish by contacting the Council's offices. The Dental Council can investigate complaints of professional misconduct made by patients made against Irish registered dentists providing remote dentistry for falling seriously below the standards expected of a dentist.