

# Your Amazing Smile

## A Healthy, Beautiful Smile Is Within Reach

(NAPSA)—One of the most affordable investments in your healthy future may be orthodontic treatment.

### Doctor's Advice

“Orthodontic treatment is one of the few investments that can last a lifetime,” says Morris N. Poole, DDS, president of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO). “The goal of orthodontic treatment is a functional bite, ensuring the top and bottom teeth meet and work as nature intended. This allows an individual to bite, chew and speak effectively and avoid excessive wear of tooth enamel, contributing to overall oral health. A healthy smile is an attractive smile, too, and can boost personal and professional confidence.”

### Surprisingly Affordable

Although many people incorrectly assume that orthodontic care is beyond their reach, orthodontists who are members of the AAO have embraced advancements in technology that keep costs down and make it possible for more people to reap the lifelong benefits of orthodontic treatment.

Most orthodontists offer a variety of payment options. These can include interest-free in-house financing, payment plans with or without down payments, payment in full at the beginning of treatment with a discount, or bank or other financing. In a recent study, AAO members reported that the average monthly payment is \$188—that's less than \$7 a day, typically less than the cost of going out to lunch.

Dr. Poole points out that fees for orthodontic treatment have not kept up with inflation. For example, 30 years ago, the cost of a new car averaged \$9,000. Today it's \$33,560, a jump of 337 per-



**Smile: Getting beautiful, straight teeth can be more affordable than you expected.**

cent. The average price of a new house then was around \$89,000—now it's well over \$350,000, roughly quadrupling. “My fees have gone up in 30 years of practice, of course, but nowhere near the pace of other costs.”

Further savings include complimentary or low-cost initial consultations, and no referral is required.

What's more, dental insurance can offset a portion of the fee for treatment. Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) can be used for orthodontic treatment, as well.

### Age No Object

Healthy teeth can be moved at any age, and no one is “too old” for treatment. Today, people from 8 to 80 can have successful orthodontic treatment. More than one patient in four today is an adult.

### How To Learn More

The best way to find out about orthodontic care and its affordability is to consult an AAO-member orthodontist. Only orthodontists can be AAO members. Orthodontists are dental school graduates who go on for two to three years of education focused on orthodontics at an accredited orthodontic residency program.

To find an orthodontist nearby, visit the Find an Orthodontist service at [www.mylifemysmile.org](http://www.mylifemysmile.org).