

In Just One Short Month...

Soon we will all be making lists of things we would like to change in 2012. Whether it is a personal fitness, financial, or family-oriented goal, New Year's Resolutions are a vital tradition of the holiday season. In the coming year, why not add a "new *spectacular smile*" to your list?

Did you know that about a quarter of our active patients are adults? Did you also know that the majority of these adult patients report *no regrets* in pursuing orthodontic treatment at an adult age? Obtaining that beautiful smile you have always dreamed of is easier than you think!

Call our office today to schedule a complimentary exam and we will be happy to present to you various esthetic and budget-friendly options that will fit your needs. As always, we are also here for your friends and family too!

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this issue

Nail Biting SOS **P.1**

Malocclusion - What is it? **P.2**

Choosing a Toothbrush? **P.3**

Inside a Day at Burleson Orthodontics **P.4**

How to Stop the Nail Biting Habit

Nail biting, also known as onychophagia, is one of the most common habits among various age groups, including children, teens and young adults. Nail biting is generally triggered by stress, excitement, boredom or inactivity. It can also be a learned behavior from family members. Nail biting is the most common of the typical "nervous habits," along with thumb sucking, hair pulling or twisting, tooth grinding or picking at one's skin.

What you may not know :

- About half of all children between the ages of 10 and 18 have been nail biters at one time or another.
- Nail biting occurs most often during puberty.
- Boys bite their nails more often than girls after the age of 10.
- Most people stop biting their nails by age 30.
- Experts estimate that about 30% of children and about 15% of adults chew their nails.

Often the habit decreases with age.

That being said, nail biting is unhealthy for your teeth. Here's why:

- **It's unsanitary.** Fingernails are home to bacteria and germs. Your nails are almost twice as dirty as your fingers. Hence, biting your nails is just asking for germs and bacteria. Nail biting is related to dental problems such as gingival injury. Nail biting can also transfer pinworms or bacteria buried under the surface of the nail to your mouth.

- **Something to chew on.** Nail biting causes your teeth to constantly be chewing, wearing them teeth down faster than a non-nail biter, while putting a large amount of stress on your front teeth. This can then contribute to malocclusion of the anterior teeth.
- **Braces don't love it either.** If you're in orthodontic treatment, braces already put pressure on teeth, and nail biting adds unnecessary additional pressure, further stressing your teeth and weakening roots.
- **It can be costly.** Nail biting can result in up to \$4,000 in additional dental bills over a lifetime, according to the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD).

What can you do about it?

Now that you know how harmful and costly nail biting can be, it's time to take action to break your nail biting habit.

- Try to be conscious of your fingernails and to keep them looking good—this will help you resist the temptation.
- Apply clear, bitter-tasting nail polish to the nails. The bitter flavor discourages nail biting.
- Mouth guards can help prevent nail biting.

If all else fails, experts suggest thinking about when and why you chew your nails. Understanding the triggers can help you find a solution and stop the habit. Some nail biters have even found behavioral therapy an effective means to stop nail biting.

Thank you for
your referrals!

RECENT REFERRALS :

VIP MEMBERS
(3 or more referrals)

Jane Grushka
Tracy Ingle

TWO REFERRALS

Kim Thorne
David Pacer
Stacey Woodward
Corey Dempsey
Icil Gittings
Eduardo Melendez
Isabella Nihart
Mary Grace Hunter
Alyssa Riggins
Hope Mayo
Kellie Robertson
Kate Eichens
Nicholas Crawford
Hanna Ly

ONE REFERRAL

Brooke Yager
Juliette Rafael
Marquita Bass
Grant Dempsey
Logan Crichlow
Jillian Ketchmark
Jennifer Brown
Jared Ezzell
Cristian Vivas
Kelly Fricker
Anthony Koncecny
Jessica Stout
Michelle Reynolds
Alexis Frey
Kelsey Santellan
Janee Williams
FatimahRae Bell
Brea Woodman
Tre Jenkins
William Thomas Jr.
Zachary Loper
Alex Sawyer
Andy Sawyer
Jennifer Baumstark
Michelle Lober
Maria Freeman
Kelsey Shannon

DEAR DR. BURLESON...

*"Now I am proud of
my smile which I
wear all the time!"*



-Emily D.

Dr. Burleson Said "Malocclusion" - What Does it Mean?

The term "malocclusion" was coined by Edward Angle, the "father of modern orthodontics," who invented appliances and surgical techniques as a treatment to the condition. Malocclusion is commonly known as "bad bite." The condition may also be referred to as an irregular bite, crossbite or overbite.

Malocclusion is the improper alignment of teeth and/or jaws. When your teeth and jaws are not properly aligned, it may impact your bite. As a result, over years your teeth may become crooked, worn or protruded. Malocclusion can interfere with your ability to properly care for your teeth and your gum tissue health, by making it difficult to floss and brush. Additionally, malocclusion can affect your appearance, speech and ability to eat.

Malocclusion is most often found during a routine dental exam. A dentist will check your occlusion by watching how the teeth make contact when you bite down normally. When malocclusion is suspected, photographs, bite assessment technology, and x-rays of the face and mouth may be taken to further confirm the diagnosis. A dentist may make plaster, plastic or artificial stone models of your teeth from impressions to duplicate the fit of the teeth and to help in planning the optimal treatment to resolve this condition.

Malocclusion is a common condition and often not preventable. Children often have some degree of malocclusion. It is often inherited, but may be acquired. Inherited conditions include too many or too few teeth, too much or too little space between teeth, irregular mouth and jaw size and shape, and atypical formations of the jaws and face, such as a cleft palate. Malocclusions can occur due to habits such as finger or thumb sucking, premature loss of teeth from an accident or dental disease, and even from medical conditions such as enlarged tonsils and adenoids that lead to mouth breathing.

For a malocclusion caused by a habit such as thumb sucking, stopping the behavior can often arrest the progression of malocclusion. However, the most common solution for malocclusion is orthodontic treatment. It is suggested that an initial consultation with an orthodontist be scheduled before a child is 7 years of age. This may lead to appropriate proactive management of the growth and development of the child's dental and facial structures, circumventing many of the factors contributing to malocclusion.



At any given time, there are more than four million people in the United States wearing braces, most of whom are children and teenagers. However, more than 800,000 adults are receiving orthodontic treatment as well. Braces apply constant, gentle force to slowly change the position of teeth, straightening and achieving proper alignment. This treatment remedies symptoms stemming from malocclusion.

The actual course of orthodontic treatment, including the length of time you will require braces, will be determined by the severity of your malocclusion. The goal of your treatment is to move your teeth into the proper position and correct any misalignment in the jaw to circumvent any possible damage.

At our practice, we use the most advanced technology in the field in order to ensure that you receive the best possible results to treat your malocclusion. If you have any questions about malocclusion, or wish to schedule a consultation, please **give us a call** and we'll answer any questions you may have.

Toothbrush 101: How to Choose the Right One

In the late 1930s, when nylon bristle toothbrushes were first invented, consumers didn't have many options. Now, it's different. Most stores that sell oral hygiene products have an extensive selection of different types of toothbrushes on their shelves, including manual and powered varieties. In addition, there is a vast array of toothbrushes to choose from: tapered heads, round, big, small. And then there are bristles to consider: soft, medium or hard.

Brushing your teeth is one of the easiest methods to prevent tooth decay (cavities) and gum disease. But when was the last time you put any substantive thought into selecting your toothbrush? Is there really a difference between toothbrushes for kids and adults?

Let's look at important elements in selecting the optimal manual toothbrush:

Who is the toothbrush for?

If it's a child, get them a child-sized brush. We all know children enjoy brushing their teeth as much as bathing so help make the event more enjoyable by getting a toothbrush with a favorite cartoon character on the handle or their favorite color. Also look for a toothbrush specifically designed for children, with a larger handle for your child to help them control the toothbrush better.

What size head should I get?

Many would choose the largest head, thinking that it would cover more of the surface of your teeth. Actually, a small head is often best to make it easier to clean those hard to reach places. A small brush head can also help to save your gums from damage.



To ensure your toothbrush has undergone rigorous quality control testing for cleaning effectiveness and safety, ask us for a recommendation. As long as you brush your teeth regularly, and the American Dental Association recommends this to be twice daily for 2 minutes each time, using the proper brushing technique, you should be able to reduce plaque build-up and keep your gums and teeth healthy with either a manual or powered toothbrush.

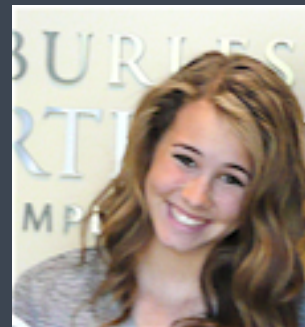
Finally, we recommend you change your toothbrush or toothbrush head every two to three months. Toothbrushes with frayed bristles can damage your gums and will be less effective in cleaning teeth.

Still can't decide?

Give us a call and we'll be happy to give you solid advice as to what toothbrush is best for you.

BurlesonOrtho.com

Patient Spotlight Adrianna Elliott



One of our patients, Adrianna Elliott, is a state-recognized golfer!

Adrianna went to Missouri's state golf competition this year and placed in the top 20. She also received a varsity letter as a freshman in high school. She has been golfing for many years and has brought her talents to her high school's golf team this year.

Adrianna is also involved in honor choir and student council at her school. She loves to sing and play basketball. She played on her school's basketball team last year but previously played for fun.

Adrianna is also involved in her church and volunteers with the EDGE youth program. She also previously was involved in track and field and gymnastics.

We are so lucky to have such talented and generous patients. Thank you Adrianna!

Braces Q&A:

Q: My child has braces currently and is a little bummed about not being able to eat some of his favorite holiday treats because they are too hard or sticky. Any tips?

You're right- hard, sticky and chewy foods can be detrimental to braces. But you don't have to forgo all of the best treats during this holiday season! Here are a few tips to help your child enjoy foods that are braces friendly:



1. **Find some braces-friendly recipes.** [The Braces Cookbook](#) by Pamela and Brenda Waterman have great ideas for snacks that you will love.

2. **Cut chewy foods into small pieces.** Breads, rolls, and other chewy (not sticky!) snacks are ok as long as they are cut into smaller bites that won't get lodged underneath an orthodontic wire.

3. **Stock up on fun treats for when the braces come off.** If your child is a little disappointed now, remind them how great their teeth will look soon and that they will get to go back to their old diet with hard, sticky, and chewy foods included in a very short time! Don't give in to the temptation to eat those off-limit foods- they can cause broken brackets and bent wires which can easily increase treatment time!



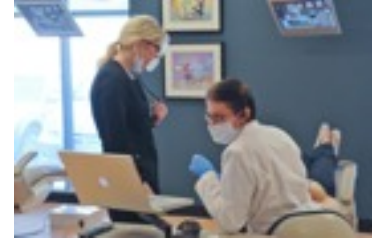
A Day at the Office

Many of our patients ask about what we do all day while serving our patients. Here are a few examples of our wonderful patients and talented staff behind the scenes. During this Holiday Season, we are especially thankful for you, our amazing patients!

Did you know?

Is a friend or family member holding out on starting orthodontic treatment because they don't want to miss school or work? Did you know that our office often is open for extended evening and weekend hours to better serve our patients?

We are committed to providing the best care for our patients and we know that means being able to provide convenient appointment times.



For more photos, visit [Facebook.com/BurlesonOrthodontics](https://www.facebook.com/BurlesonOrthodontics)