

Traditional Metal Braces

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Traditional Metal Braces

What Are Metal Braces?

Traditional metal braces are the most time-tested system in orthodontics — and despite decades of innovation, they remain the most precise tool available for correcting a wide range of bite and alignment problems. Consisting of small metal brackets bonded to the front surface of each tooth and connected by a thin archwire, braces apply gentle, continuous force to guide teeth into their correct positions over time.

Modern metal braces are significantly smaller and more comfortable than older generations of the same technology. High-grade stainless steel brackets have lower profiles, reduced friction, and in many cases use self-ligating mechanisms that eliminate the need for elastic ties altogether. The result is a highly controlled treatment system capable of addressing the most complex tooth movements with exceptional accuracy.

At Collins Street Specialist Centre, braces are prescribed and managed exclusively by registered specialist orthodontists — clinicians who have completed three or more years of postgraduate specialist training beyond dental school, specifically in the mechanics of tooth movement and jaw development.

When Might You Need Braces?

Braces are suitable for a wide range of orthodontic problems, spanning mild cosmetic concerns to complex bite disorders. You may be a candidate for traditional braces if you have:

- **Crowded teeth** — when there is insufficient arch space for teeth to align properly
- **Gaps between teeth** — spacing irregularities caused by missing teeth or jaw size discrepancies
- **Overbite** — the upper front teeth significantly overlap the lower
- **Underbite** — the lower jaw protrudes forward, causing the lower teeth to sit in front of the upper
- **Crossbite** — upper and lower teeth do not meet correctly on one or both sides
- **Open bite** — front teeth do not make contact when back teeth bite together
- **Deep bite** — excessive vertical overlap of the front teeth
- **Impacted teeth** — teeth that are partially or fully trapped in the gumline and need to be guided into the arch
- **Rotated or tilted teeth** — individual teeth that are out of their ideal position
- **Asymmetry** — midline discrepancies

where the upper and lower dental arches do not align centrally

Braces are effective across all age groups, from adolescents to adults, though treatment timing may influence the specific approach your orthodontist recommends.

What to Expect: Step by Step

Initial Consultation Your first appointment with a CSSC specialist orthodontist involves a comprehensive clinical examination. Your specialist will review your dental and medical history, assess your jaw joints, facial profile, and existing bite, and identify any underlying concerns that need to be addressed before or during orthodontic treatment. Digital radiographs — including an OPG (full-arch panoramic image) and lateral cephalogram — are taken to assess tooth root positions and skeletal relationships.

Records and Treatment Planning If braces are appropriate, detailed orthodontic records are taken. At CSSC this includes digital scanning using the iTero Element intraoral scanner, eliminating the need for traditional impression material. These scans, combined with clinical photos and radiographs, are used to develop your personalised treatment plan. Your specialist will explain the proposed tooth movements, expected treatment duration, and any extractions or other preparations required.

Bracket Placement Brackets are bonded directly to the enamel surface of each tooth using dental adhesive. The procedure is painless and typically takes 60–90 minutes. The archwire is then threaded through each bracket and secured. You will leave with braces in place on the same day.

Active Treatment Over the course of treatment — typically 18 to 30 months, depending on case complexity — you will attend regular appointments approximately every 6 to 8 weeks. At each visit your orthodontist adjusts the archwire and monitors tooth movement. Some teeth may require additional auxiliary mechanics such as elastic chains, coil springs, or inter-arch elastics (rubber bands) to achieve the planned movements.

Where appropriate, AcceleDent — a micro-pulse mouthpiece worn for 20 minutes daily — can be used to accelerate tooth movement by up to 50%, shortening overall treatment time. Your orthodontist will advise if this is suitable for your case.

Completion and Retention Once your teeth have reached their planned positions, the brackets and wire are removed. Impressions or scans are taken for retainers, which are fitted shortly after debonding. Retainers — either removable or fixed — are an essential part of orthodontic treatment and must be worn as directed to preserve your results long-term.

Recovery and Aftercare

There is no recovery period associated with brace placement itself. However, some soreness is expected for two to three days after each adjustment appointment, as the teeth respond to the forces being applied. Over-the-counter pain relief (such as paracetamol or ibuprofen) is usually sufficient.

During treatment you will need to:

- **Avoid hard, sticky, or chewy foods** — popcorn, hard nuts, toffees, hard crusts, and chewing ice can damage brackets or dislodge wires
- **Maintain rigorous oral hygiene** — brushing around each bracket and using interdental brushes or floss threaders to clean between teeth and under the archwire. Uncontrolled plaque around brackets can cause white spot lesions (early tooth decay) that are permanent
- **Attend all adjustment appointments** — missed visits extend treatment time
- **Wear elastics as prescribed** — if inter-arch elastics are part of your plan, consistent wear is critical to achieving the desired tooth and jaw movement

After treatment, retainers must be worn as instructed — typically full-time initially, transitioning to night-time only. Teeth have a natural tendency to drift back toward their original positions; retainers are what prevent this.

Why See a Specialist Orthodontist?

Orthodontics is a Dental Board of Australia–registered specialty. A specialist orthodontist has completed a minimum of three additional years of full-time postgraduate training in orthodontics after obtaining their dental degree. This training encompasses the biology of tooth movement, growth and development, diagnosis of complex malocclusions, biomechanics, and the management of orthodontic complications.

Braces, when correctly prescribed and managed, are a powerful and predictable treatment. But the forces applied must be carefully calibrated to avoid root resorption, enamel damage, gum recession, or relapse. These risks are substantially reduced when treatment is managed by a trained specialist rather than a general dentist offering orthodontic services as part of a broader practice.

At CSSC, your orthodontic specialist works within a multidisciplinary environment. If your treatment requires input from a periodontist (gum management), prosthodontist (restorations to be coordinated with bite changes), oral and maxillofacial surgeon (surgical components), or paediatric dentist (if you are a younger patient), those specialists are accessible in the same building.

Our Orthodontic Specialists

Orthodontic treatment at Collins Street Specialist Centre is provided by:

- **Dr David Austin** — BDS (Melb), MDS Orth (HK), MOrth RCS (Edin). Specialist training at the University of Hong Kong. Member of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh. Extensive experience in both conventional and lingual braces. - **Dr Andrea Phatouros** — BDS (WA), MDS Orth (WA), FRACDS. Postgraduate Clinical Award for Excellence. Experienced in the full range of specialist orthodontic treatment, including teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. - **Dr Joshua Ch'ng** — BDS (Melb), FRACDS, D.Clin.Dent (Melb). Research experience in 3D digital orthodontics at the University of Michigan. Recipient of the Kenneth Sutherland Prize. - **Dr Steven Smith** — BDS (Hons), MDS (Ortho) (Qld). Specialist orthodontist with Honours-level dental training and postgraduate specialist qualification from the University of Queensland.

All four orthodontists are registered specialists with the Dental Board of Australia. You can verify their specialist registration at AHPRA (ahpra.gov.au).

Orthodontics is practised on **Level 12 & Tower, Manchester Unity Building**, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD. No referral is required to book an initial consultation.

Related Treatments

- [\[Invisalign \(Clear Aligner Treatment\)\]\(/orthodontics/invisalign/\)](#) — an alternative to braces using a series of removable clear aligners - [\[Lingual Braces\]\(/orthodontics/lingual-braces/\)](#) — braces bonded to the inner surface of teeth, invisible from the front - [\[Early Intervention Orthodontics\]\(/orthodontics/early-intervention/\)](#) — interceptive treatment for children during growth phases - [\[Surgical Orthodontics\]\(/orthodontics/surgical-orthodontics/\)](#) — combined orthodontic and jaw surgery for skeletal problems - [\[Adult Orthodontics\]\(/orthodontics/adult-orthodontics/\)](#) — orthodontic treatment considerations specific to adult patients