



Financial Policy

The philosophy of this office is to provide the highest quality of orthodontic care in a warm and caring environment. Our fees reflect that quality and vary according to the complexity of the case, estimated length of treatment time, patient cooperation, as well as other factors.

Fees are divided into 2 sections:

- 1) Pre-treatment Records: Study casts, facial & oral photographs, panoramic x-ray, cephalometric x-ray
- 2) Treatment: a) The treatment fee covers **all** active orthodontic care that was recommended prior to the start of treatment. It will not include additional appliances needed due to poor cooperation, and
b) Insertion and adjustment of retainers for a 1-year period.

Your treatment and the fee for treatment does NOT include:

- 1) Dental cleanings, examinations, fillings, extractions or other dental procedures
- 2) Surgery if required to the jaws, joints, or tissue; or surgery to uncover impacted teeth
- 3) TMJ treatment
- 4) Treating gums or bone problems
- 5) Medical services for injury to the mouth or face while in braces
- 6) Medical services for any treatment-related items swallowed

Payments are due by the 15th of the month. We do not send out monthly statements; however, we will provide you with a coupon booklet upon your request. We accept checks and credit cards (MasterCard & Visa). For your convenience, we offer monthly automatic withdrawal from your checking, savings or credit card. Late fees will be applied if payment is not received by the **25th** of the month.

If the payment is 30 days delinquent, a 30-day letter will be sent. During this month the patient will be seen but no active treatment will be performed. We will check for broken or loose appliances and evaluate hygiene until the account is brought current.

If the account falls 60 days delinquent, late charges are applied on both late payments. No active treatment will occur until the account is brought up to date.

If the account falls 90 days delinquent, further late charges are applied and a DISMISSAL letter will be sent by certified mail. This will terminate our responsibility to the patient. Further orthodontic treatment will have to be rendered by another orthodontist. However, if the patient finds alternate financing and pays the entire unpaid balance, active treatment can be reinstated.

A monthly payment is simply a convenient way to spread out the cost of orthodontic treatment and is not related to treatment progress or appointments; therefore, payment is still deducted/credited even if there is no appointment during the month. The balance of the total treatment fee is due before the appliances are removed (braces, Invisalign). If you transfer during the course of treatment, your account will be prorated and the account will be settled prior to sending your records to your new orthodontist.

We realize that temporary financial problems may affect timely payment of your account. If such problems do arise, we encourage you to contact us promptly for assistance in management of your account.

Patients being treated with Invisalign:

**Once the custom Invisalign trays have been manufactured, the patient/parent is financially responsible for \$2500 to cover the cost: 1) records (x-rays, photos, digital impression scan), 2) Dr. Durrett's treatment planning with patient and Invisalign, and 3) lab fee to Invisalign.

Insurance Policy

Upon verification and assignment of orthodontic insurance benefit, an insurance ledger will be established with the amount of estimated insurance benefits. Our office will then be responsible for the monthly/quarterly filing of insurance statements.

- Insurance will pay provided the patient is still eligible for coverage, active treatment is still being rendered and the lifetime orthodontic benefit has not been exceeded.
- If for any reason during active treatment the insurance benefits decrease, change or terminate, the unpaid balance will be transferred back into the patient's ledger and will be the responsibility of the patient. **Any unpaid insurance balance at the end of treatment is the patient's responsibility and must be paid before appliances are scheduled to be removed.**
- It is the patient's/parents responsibility to inform us of any change in coverage or company. We may need to ask your help in filing out forms or making calls to the insurance company.
- We reserve the right to refuse to process/accept insurance benefits at any time.
- **Insurance companies allow orthodontists to charge extra fees for clear braces and Invisalign. The contracted maximum allowable charges (or allowance) set forth by your insurance company do not apply for clear braces or Invisalign/Invisalign teen. Insurance will not cover the additional charges for Invisalign or Clear braces, even if your orthodontic benefits have not been fully used.**

Extra Charge Policy

- 1) Broken appointments without 24 hour advance cancellation notice or a rescheduled appointment due to arriving late will be assessed a fee of **\$25.00 per 30 minutes**.
- 2) Broken appliances which are the result of poor patient cooperation will be assessed a repair fee of **\$35.00 per broken bracket (after 2 broken), and \$200-\$400 for large appliances (expanders, bite correctors, etc.)**. This fee is due at the time of repair.
- 3) Lost or broken aligners
- 4) After hours emergency appointments will be assessed a **\$50** fee.
- 5) **ADDITIONAL MONTHLY CHARGES MAY BE INCURRED FOR EXTENDED TREATMENT TIME (4 months beyond estimated treatment) DUE TO POOR COOPERATION.** (i.e. lack of rubber band and/or headgear wear, poor tooth brushing and improper diet, and lost time due to breakage or missed appointments). Our services may be discontinued for lack of cooperation.
- 6) Your financial agreement includes one set of retainers. If you require another set because they are lost, damaged or you had restorative dental work, there will be a charge for the new retainer(s).
- 7) A **\$25.00** charge will be made to the patient's account for any late payments received after the 15th of the month, returned checks or non-sufficient funds of automatic check debit and credit cards.
- 8) Should you need to transfer to another orthodontist; a **\$100** fee will be assessed to cover the cost to duplicate records (x-rays, photos and models).

RECORDED CALLS NOTICE: ALL INCOMING AND OUTGOING CALLS ARE RECORDED FOR QUALITY AND TRAINING PURPOSES.

Appointment Policy (Office Hours: Monday 8am - 5:00pm; Tuesday to Thursday 8:30am - 5:00pm)

Appointments are normally scheduled at six to eight week intervals for patients with braces, and eight to ten week intervals for patients with Invisalign. When braces or Invisalign are removed and retainers are placed, these intervals are gradually extended. Longer appointments, which are occasional, are scheduled during school or work hours. In this way, the shorter appointments can accommodate as many families as possible during early morning or after school or work hours.

We are sensitive to the fact that families have many obligations during the day. We have devoted considerable time and effort into designing our scheduling system. We want to see you on time, have adequate time to do the necessary procedures, answer questions, and update you on treatment progress. Arriving on time will permit us to accomplish all the treatment planned for the day.

It is up to the patient to schedule his/her own appointments on a timely basis. These can be scheduled when leaving after each visit and are therefore scheduled in advance. Twenty-four (24) hour notice is required to cancel an appointment. **If an appointment is missed, it is the patient's responsibility to contact our office immediately to set up a new appointment.** Missed appointments or numerous appointment changes will inevitably result in an extension of treatment time. Our goal in rescheduling appointments is to keep your treatment progressing and on time. Waiting for a convenient after school appointment can delay treatment.

As a courtesy to you, we offer automated email, phone and text reminders to confirm your appointment. Please do not rely on this as the only means of remembering your appointment as there could be technical circumstances that may prevent reminders from going out. We offer this only as a courtesy to you. Please provide us with your email address and home/cell phone if you would like to take advantage of this method.

Broken Appliances

If you have a problem with your braces, please call prior to your appointment as we may have to reschedule to provide adequate time for repairs. If you show up for a short appointment with a problem, we may not have the time to fix it. When in doubt, please call.

Seeing your Dentist

All **orthodontic** patients are expected to see their dentists for regular examinations before we start, at least every 6 months during treatment, and soon after the removal of braces. Adult patients are expected to see their dentist a minimum of every 4-6 months for a cleaning and exam while orthodontic appliances are in place.

Termination

This office reserves the right to discontinue treatment for any of the following reasons:

- 1) Recommended treatment is not carried out, or there is a lack of cooperation on the part of the patient or parent.
- 2) Repeated breakage, loss, or handling of appliances.
- 3) Failure to keep the teeth and appliances clean.
- 4) Repeated missed appointments.
- 5) Delinquent account.
- 6) Breakdown in relationship between patient/parent and Doctor.

Appointment Policies

While in our office, parents and patients may take photos of their own family members. However, in order to comply with HIPAA regulations and protect our patient's privacy, parents and patients **MAY NOT TAKE PHOTOS OF NON-FAMILY MEMBERS (OTHER PATIENTS AND THOSE PATIENT'S FAMILY MEMBERS), AND MAY NOT POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA.**

Arriving on time for your appointments

We strive to see you on time and complete the procedures necessary for treatment to progress. However, we need our patient's help in order to stay on time. Once the braces are placed, most appointments can be completed in 20 minutes. Arriving 5-10 minutes late does not give our office enough time to provide the quality care that our patients expect and deserve. Also, it is not fair for other patients to wait because the patient before them was late.

- Please **arrive 5 minutes early** to the appointment to give time for **brushing. We want you seated in the dental chair at your appointment time.**
- Please place our office number in your cell phone contact list.
- Please **call even if you are going to be 5 minutes late.** We may need to reschedule the appointment.
- Occasionally we can still see a patient that arrives late, but the patient may have to wait for an extended period of time, or may have a longer wait time even if they are seated immediately when they arrive late in order to make sure we see our other patients on time

PLEASE HELP US MAKE THE ORTHODONTIC EXPERIENCE AN EXCELLENT EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE.

Appointment Reminders

It is the patient/parent/guardian's responsibility to remember appointments that were scheduled with our office. We make every attempt to make reminder emails and/or reminder phone calls; however, these reminders are a courtesy and should NOT be relied upon to remember your appointment. If you do not receive a reminder email or reminder phone call, you are still responsible for remembering your appointments.

We will NOT excuse a missed appointment because you did not receive a reminder email or reminder phone call. A missed appointment FEE will be charged after missing 2 appointments.

Missed appointments include:

- 1) Same-day cancellations for any reason
- 2) Cancellations without 24 hours notice for any reason
- 3) Not showing up for an appointment

Email, Phone and Text Reminders

These reminders are automatically generated by a 3rd party HIPAA compliant software company (Sesame Interactive) that has access to our schedule. My staff does not manually send out the emails even though it may seem like we send them from our office because an employee's name is in the "from" address. It is the patient/parent/guardian's responsibility to notify our office by the 2nd appointment if you do not receive our reminder emails and if your email address changes. We also use your email address to inform you of important office notifications such as changes to our normal office hours, invitations to special office

events, etc. If you unsubscribe to our emails then you may be removed from all emails. Please make sure you add us to the "safe sender" list to avoid having our emails sent to junk/spam email folder. You may opt out of the phone and text reminders as well. Appointment reminder methods are occasionally modified to suit the needs of our patients.

Limitations of a Reminder System

There are many problems that can arise that our office cannot control which may interfere with our ability to confirm your appointment. The following are examples of common problems that we face which do not allow us to reach our customers:

- 1) Cell phone message box is full.
- 2) Phone # is disconnected
- 3) Change of phone # and/ or email address without notifying our office
- 4) Emails are sent to our customer's junk/spam folders because they have not added us to their "safe sender" contact list
- 5) Power outages
- 6) We leave a message with another family member who answers the phone but that person does not give the message to the person responsible for bringing the patient to the appointment.
- 7) Customers don't receive cell phone messages because their cell phone carrier (Verizon, Sprint, etc) was having temporary network problems.

Viewing Appointments Online 24/7

For your convenience, you can view patient's past and future appointments 24 hours/day online at www.durrettorthodontics.com. Click on the patient login and follow the directions to set up your password to login to patient's protected information.

Once logged on, you can:

- Manage the email addresses associated with the account
- Enroll and manage cell phone numbers associated with the account
- View appointment information and confirm appointments
- View current and historical payment and charges information
- Print out ledger for Flexible Spending Accounts and Taxes
- View x-rays and photographs of the patient associated with the account
- View Invisalign treatment plan, if applicable