

The tooth hurts

IF YOU WANT MARLENE'S SMILE AVOID 'QUICK FIX' DENTAL CLINICS

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ORTHODONTISTS have warned patients looking for a quick fix they could be in danger of losing their teeth.

The Orthodontics Society of Ireland has launched their first awareness week to highlight the problems caused by rogue clinics at home and abroad.

Dr Sinead O'Hanrahan said: "Orthodontists who represent a highly-specialised and valued branch of dentistry are growing increasingly concerned at reports of patients dissatisfied with the results of treatments used by some cosmetic dentists at 'smile clinics' to straighten teeth.

"Many of the treatments offered at these clinics which are heavily promoted are offered by dentists

inexperienced in providing orthodontic treatment but who are claiming to give a beautiful smile in six months or less.

"In fact only about 5% of patients would be suitable for a very quick six months type of alignment.

"Practices offer six-month braces to patients but people need to be aware these can't fit or suit everyone.

"It is physically not possible and it's not that easy." Dr O'Hanrahan added that she and her colleagues have seen a number of people who lost teeth as a result of not getting the right treatment.

She said: "We

also had someone come back to us who had two front teeth where their roots had all died off and were about to fall out because whoever had treated them had not recognised a buried tooth at the top of the gums.

"For those people it is an utter disaster." But Dr O'Hanrahan said getting the right treatment can also be life-changing for patients.

Marlene O'Reilly, 36, has just completed two-and-a-half-years of treatment after her teeth were damaged as a teen.

The mum of two, from Kells, Co Meath, said: "I was only 13 when my teeth got broken.

"We were mucking around and the hurley stick caught the front of my mouth and smashed my two

front teeth. One was broken in half and the other was snapped near the root.

"From then on the one broken in half always had to get crowns and over the years I tried to get the smallest one fixed but nothing really ever worked properly.

"I had very low confidence because of them.

"I hated my teeth and I hated getting my photograph taken."

But Marlene discovered it's never too late to save your smile.

She said: "There wasn't much left to work with then and my

dentist recommended an implant or dentures.

"I felt I was too young for dentures at my age so I decided I wanted to get the implant.

"I feel brilliant now. It took about two and a half years for all the treatment to be finished. I am more confident and bubbly and I wish I had taken the steps ages ago."

► FOR more information visit www.orthodontics.ie

Checklist for parents and adults considering treatment

1. Check qualifications
2. Consider all the options
3. Don't expect a quick fix

Many treatments are offered by inexperienced dentists
SINEAD O'HANRAHAN



