



BRACE YOURSELVES: RISING DEMAND FOR THE PERFECT SMILE

STRAIGHT UP: Braces aren't just for teens as more Irish adults are opting for them

BRACES are generally associated with teenagers but a growing number of Irish adults are getting them fitted to achieve the perfect smile.

One in four people being fitted with braces by Irish orthodontists are adults - and it is a figure that is growing.

An estimated 60pc of us are unhappy with our imperfect teeth. Overcrowding and prominent teeth are the most common reasons people seek help.

Hollywood stars Tom Cruise (51) and Eva Longoria (38) were fitted with braces as adults, setting the trend for all age groups, as well as teens like One Direction's Niall Horan (19) who tweeted his joy earlier this year at finishing up with his brace treatment.

CASES

Dr **Sinead O'Hanrahan** who works as an orthodontist in Navan, Co Meath, said that in her practice, 20 to 30pc of cases are adults getting braces.

"I have had mothers whose kids have had treatment and they got a good result.

"Then they say, 'What can I do with my own teeth?'"

"I had a patient who was 66 when she got braces."

Dr O'Hanrahan, who is the Vice President of the Orthodontic Society of Ireland (OSI), said that healthy teeth can be moved at any age and an increasing number of adults are availing of specialist orthodontic treatment. "Ideally, however, the first

orthodontic consultation should be at approximately nine years of age, before the last baby teeth are shed, as this gives the orthodontist more treatment options.

"A decision can then be made as to whether early intervention is appropriate or whether it is better to wait," she said. The costs of get-

ting orthodontic treatment can vary. While some travel to Northern Ireland for treatment, travelling abroad is not really a practical option given the number of attendances for treatment required.

Top and bottom "train tracks" cost on average between €3,800 and €4,500 in this country. "Lingual" braces, which go on the inside of the teeth, can cost significantly more.

Dr **Katherine Condren**, President of the OSI who practices in Terenure, Dublin, does not believe that treatment by orthodontists is very expensive.

"We would think you get great value for money. You come in, the treatment goes on poten-

tially for many years. There are very many appointments.

"You are not asked for all of the fee up-front. There is a down payment and then there would be a monthly payment plan, which would go on over years. Plus there is tax relief."

An inaugural awareness campaign has been launched by the OSI, which offers advice to people who are considering getting their own or their children's teeth straightened.

For more information, see www.orthodontics.ie.

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92pc of dentists have reported a rise in patients with gum disease after cutbacks in recent years, according to Irish Dental Association figures.

