

Dr Karen Brook
Orthodontist
Specialist Practice
Auckland

Orthodontics – Myths and Misconceptions

A commonsense look at the fact and fiction surrounding various orthodontic treatment philosophies

Lecture 1– Early Treatment and Expansion

In recent years I have noticed a change in those presenting for their initial orthodontic visit. An increasing number have already had a course of early orthodontic treatment. Some come bearing several removable appliances; others are aggrieved at having to seek a specialist orthodontic opinion when they have already paid for 'treatment' with their general dentist. To parents and dental professionals there seems to be a war going on, with the battle lines defined by certain myths and misconceptions about how Specialist Orthodontists treat cases; myths that state that Specialist Orthodontists treat late and don't expand jaws, whereas general dentists (with an interest in orthodontics) treat early and expand so extractions won't be needed. In this first lecture I will look at the fact and fiction surrounding early treatment and expansion. In this increasingly 'cosmetically focused' age there is always something that looks like it needs to be fixed in the mixed dentition. The real issue is whether is **really needs to be fixed**. Sometimes nature and time are the best orthodontists!

Lecture 2 – Functional Appliances and Extraction Decisions

To parents and dental professionals there seems to be a war going on with the battle lines defined by certain myths and misconceptions about how Specialist Orthodontists treat cases; myths that state that Specialist Orthodontists don't use functional appliances and always extract teeth whereas general dentists (with an interest in orthodontics) use functional appliances to 'grow jaws' and never extract teeth. In this second lecture I will discuss the history of functional appliances and their use in practice today. I will then give the background to the arguments for and against extraction in orthodontic treatment, illustrate the arguments with both extraction and non-extraction cases and in put some science and sanity into what has become an emotive area of orthodontic treatment.