

Braces Cost a Little More from Orthodontists

The cost of braces depends on where one lives and if one sees an orthodontist or a general dentist, reveals a survey by The Wealthy Dentist. However, whether they are teen braces, adult braces, or Invisalign, orthodontic patients should expect it to cost around \$5,000.

February 11, 2009 (FPRC) -- Braces typically cost about \$5,000, but there is significant variation. In a poll of general dentists and orthodontists, continuing dental education resource The Wealthy Dentist found that general dentists charge an average of \$5,040 for orthodontic work, while orthodontists charge about \$5,600. While a general dentist may be fully qualified to offer braces, an orthodontist will have completed several extra years of study.

The cost of braces varies by region. Orthodontic treatment costs the most in the Northeast, the Pacific states, and Canada. Affordable braces can most easily be found in the Western mountain states. In addition, urban dentists charge more for orthodontic treatment than do suburban or rural doctors. In fact, city dentists charge about \$500 more than do country doctors.

How much dental braces cost also depends on what sort of orthodontic treatment a patient needs. This survey found that adult braces and Invisalign costs were roughly equal. Teen braces were the least expensive option, costing several hundred dollars less. Since teens' teeth are still developing, it can be technically easier to straighten crooked teeth.

Though dental braces cost thousands of dollars, dentists feel they are worth every penny. "Over that past 30 years the cost of braces has not kept pace with cost-of-living increases," mentioned a Washington orthodontist. "Thankfully technology has allowed greater efficiency and consequently reasonable profitability for the orthodontist and a good price for the consumer."

These are the prices charged for traditional metal braces. For a little extra money, consumers can choose more cosmetically attractive options. Ceramic braces, for example, use tooth-colored brackets to give the patient almost invisible braces. "I charge an additional \$400 for upper ceramic brackets," said one Ohio orthodontist.

Invisalign is an orthodontic treatment that's very different from standard braces. This method uses clear plastic aligners to slowly straighten teeth. Patients get a progressive series of aligners that move teeth into the desired position. The results may be less dramatic than with orthodontic braces, but cosmetic dentists and their patients often prefer the look of Invisalign.

Not all doctors offer Invisalign's proprietary technology. "I don't use Invisalign," commented a Kentucky orthodontist. "I make my own and adjust the aligners with Hilliard Thermopliers." And those who do use the teeth aligner technology point out that it's not a single program. "The fee for Invisalign depends on if the patient is having Express Invisalign or Full Invisalign," explained an Ohio prosthodontist. "The average fee my office charges for Full Invisalign is approximately \$5,000, and it's \$3,500 for Express Invisalign."

Today's braces dentist will offer a range of different kinds of orthodontics, not all of which will be priced the same. "Removable braces should be less expensive than fixed appliances," opined a

Virginia dentist, although that is not always the case. "I charge the same fee for all Phase II cases, whether on a Teen or Adult," explained a Nebraska dentist. "Phase I ortho fees depend on the appliances used to intercept growth and development."

"There's no getting around the fact that braces can be expensive," said Jim Du Molin, dental management consultant and founder of The Wealthy Dentist. "But having straighter teeth can be absolutely priceless."

Du Molin invites readers to visit his blog at <http://www.thewealthydentist.com/blog/693/cost-of-dental-braces/> and comment on this survey.

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