

## Those Crooked Bottom Teeth...

We all imagine that our teeth are relatively stable and stuck in place. Truth be told, our teeth are actually in a constant state of flux, constantly shifting around each day. This is why losing a tooth can cause long term problems with our bite and our jaw joints. A single missing tooth can contribute to the others shifting and throwing of our bites. Whether we like it or not, our teeth are constantly adrift.

One of the more common esthetic and hygienic questions we get has to do with the crowding of people's bottom front teeth. Over time, most people's lower anterior teeth start to crowd and get overlapped. This crowding is an esthetic problem to some and a hygiene problem for all. Crowded teeth are much more difficult to floss and clean because there are extra nooks and crannies for bacteria and plaque to hide in. Sometimes, the overlapped teeth and bacterial accumulation cause localized gum infections and cavities. Almost always, this build up of bacteria leads to bad breath. Imagine all the air leaving your mouth wafting over millions of bacteria doing their business on your teeth. That even grosses me out.

The good news is that crooked front teeth can be fixed. There are many ways about it, but orthodontics (braces) is usually the most conservative. Limited orthodontic treatment (straightening a few teeth instead of the whole bite) can be relatively quick, with initial results in a few short weeks. There are also new developments that can hide the braces so that nobody ever has to know.

As with anything we address in regards to dentistry, there are a multitude of correct ways to straighten teeth. When it comes to fixing bottom front teeth, most adult patients balk at conventional treatment, having to see silver wires and brackets in the mirror each morning. Science has brought us tooth colored ceramic brackets, a great choice for some, but the wire can still be seen in your smile. Now, there are brackets that can be placed on the back or tongue side of the teeth and you can get your teeth straightened with nothing to disrupt that ever improving smile; braces without ever having to see braces. These are called "lingual braces" and they are a great option for people who don't want to see silver on the front of their teeth.

If you don't like those crowded bottom teeth, ask your dentist if lingual braces might be right for you. Until next week, keep smiling.

-Please send comment to Drs. Parrish through [www.ParrishDental.com](http://www.ParrishDental.com).