

Having a temporary anchorage device inserted to help move teeth during brace treatment

Orthodontics and Restorative Dentistry

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Information for Patients

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What is a temporary anchorage device?

A temporary anchorage device is also known as a mini implant or a mini screw. It is a small screw that is placed between the roots of the teeth in the gum. It is there to act as an anchor point to move the teeth. They are about 2mm wide and can be up to 8mm in length. The brace is then attached to the temporary anchorage device to move the teeth in the desired direction.

How is it put in?

Your orthodontist will numb the area with some local anaesthetic. It is then inserted very slowly and carefully into the gum. There is no cutting of the gum and stitches are not needed. The anaesthetic should wear off within a few hours. Hot drinks and hot foods should be avoided until the anaesthetic wears off.

Will it be painful?

As the area will be numbed up, it should not be painful. However, you would feel some pressure whilst it is being inserted and this is normal. Once the anaesthetic wears off, it may be sore for a few hours. If it is sore, painkillers can be taken such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

How long will it stay in for?

This would depend on how complex your treatment is. Normally they are taken out part way through treatment but could be left in usually between 18 months to 2 years.

How are they taken out?

They are fairly simple to remove. Local anaesthetic is not usually needed. They are normally

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unscrewed very slowly and carefully. It may be a bit sore for a few hours after they are removed and the space should heal normally. If there is soreness, painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen can be taken. Infection after removal is uncommon.

Do I need to do anything while they are in?

You would need to keep very good oral hygiene. This would include brushing very gently yet thoroughly around the implant with a soft toothbrush as well as using a mouthwash. If the screw becomes loose or painful then you would need to tell your orthodontist. You can take paracetamol if the screw becomes sore.

What are the risks?

The success rate is above 80%.

The most common risk is that the screws can become loose. If this happens then the orthodontist would take them out and look at placing new ones later.

The screw can fracture when it is being put in and this is common (around 1 percent to 10 percent). If it does happen, the fractured portion can be left in or it may need to be removed with a surgical procedure involving cutting of the gum and placement of stitches.

Whilst the screw is inserted, it can touch the roots of the teeth. If this happens, it may become sore and the screw would be removed. The root should heal with no problems.

You can also get an infection while they are in and this is common.

What if I don't want a temporary anchorage device in my mouth?

There would be other options available and your orthodontist will explain all the options available including the risks and benefits of each option.

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