



Getting It Straight

by Dr. Kirk Christensen, Woodstock's Orthodontic Specialist

Q: *Our dentist referred my son to an orthodontist. At the consultation, I felt like I was just a number to them, we sat around forever after driving 25 minutes, and then the doctor spent only 4 minutes with us. Plus, I was shocked at the cost. Should I go there just because my dentist referred me?*

A: In a word, No. Unfortunately, your dentist overlooked that you were seeking quality, personalized care, and convenience. Here are some important guidelines to consider when choosing an orthodontist.

1. Seek a Licensed Orthodontic Specialist. Across McHenry County, orthodontic specialty care is typically excellent. Treatment styles and personalities vary, but don't get caught in the "everyone goes to" trap. Office size and glitz can cloud what you are really looking for. 2. Location is crucial in your selection. Orthodontic appointments range from 2 to 6 week intervals, and emergencies (poking wires, loose brackets, etc.) are common. If you are driving more than 15 minutes to your appointment, while passing another office, you are likely traveling too far. Sports moms and dads take note when you have practice, dinner preparation, and an appointment on the same day! Also, Does a 15 minute appointment take an hour or more? That's common in volume offices. Woodstock Orthodontics is not production oriented. 3. Get personalized care from the doctor. Volume offices hire staff to do treatment and to communicate with you. 95% of the patient care delivered at Woodstock Orthodontics is hands on by the doctor. 4. Cost. Look closely at what you are getting for your dollar. Bigger offices have huge overheads and you pay extra for that. Conversely, don't go shopping for the lowest fee, as you may be shortchanged on service and quality.

Dr. Christensen's column appears weekly in the Northwest Herald. Questions to be answered and treatment inquiries may be directed to: **Woodstock Orthodontics , c/o Kirk H. Christensen, DDS ,226 West Judd Street, Woodstock, IL 60098, Phone: 815-337-5522**