

**Interproximal**

**reduction is just a**

**fancy way of saying**

**adjusting tooth width.**



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ADJUSTING  
YOUR

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**TOOTH WIDTH**

# ABOUT

## HOW CAN MY ORTHODONTIST ADJUST MY TOOTH WIDTH?

With a procedure called interproximal reduction (IPR).

## WHAT DOES INTERPROXIMAL REDUCTION DO?

It removes some of the outer tooth surface, called enamel, where the tooth comes in contact with neighboring teeth. It is intended to properly shape the teeth, acquire more space for alignment and help the teeth fit together better. In some cases, enough space can be created so no teeth need to be removed. After braces are removed teeth are more likely to stay in place. This has been an orthodontic technique since the 1940s.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Tooth enamel is smoothed manually or with the aid of a specially-designed dental hand piece.

Interproximal reduction can be done alone, in combination with orthodontic appliance treatment, in conjunction with tooth extractions or following treatment. Many times, front teeth are contoured during or after treatment to create a balanced and harmonious appearance of teeth.



## IS THERE RISK TO MY GUMS AND TEETH?

Teeth still have sufficient enamel to remain healthy and sound. The procedure does not make teeth more susceptible to tooth decay. Nor does it predispose gums to gum disease. Occasionally, some patients may experience some sensitivity to hot or cold, but the results are generally positive. There are no nerve endings on the outer layer of the tooth.

## HOW WILL MY ORTHODONTIST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT I NEED TO REDUCE THE WIDTH OF MY TEETH?

Your orthodontist will consider the size and shape of your teeth, their positions and alignment and your facial features. Education and experience in evaluating facial characteristics allow the orthodontist to develop a treatment goal that produces a healthy bite.

## AFTER TREATMENT:

Your ortho may recommend a topical fluoride treatment and a daily fluoride rinse to help teeth maintain resistance to decay.

*Orthodontists receive an additional two-to-three years of specialized education beyond dental school to learn the proper way to align teeth and correct bites. Only those who successfully complete this formal education may call themselves orthodontists, and only orthodontists can be members of the American Association of Orthodontists. Learn more: [aaoinfo.org](http://aaoinfo.org).*