

*Today's braces are cooler and healthier than ever!*

# These are NOT Your Mother's Braces

By Dr. Robert L. Waugh

**W**hen Laura Meeks inquired about braces for her oldest daughter, she expected 11-year-old Madeline to go through the same painful, lengthy treatment she experienced during her own teen years. Instead, Laura was pleasantly surprised to discover Madeline's treatment would be different. Laura recalls, "I remember my braces being uncomfortable and the treatment never-ending!"



**Madeline, Emma and Laura Meeks**

recently when an innovative treatment approach was made possible by the combination of two emerging technologies: space age wires and low friction braces. The results were dramatic, allowing for a healthier and more comfortable method to treat patients. In addition, patient-friendly offices with entertaining video games, music and/or reading materials help young patients enjoy their visits to the orthodontist's office.

Materials and treatment delivery

systems have vastly improved, giving children and adults a better overall experience. New technologies in treatment, "space age" wires, low friction braces, advanced computer imaging software, and other diagnostic tools are streamlining orthodontic treatment and offer quicker, healthier, more comfortable solutions for aligning teeth, not to mention "cooler" for kids. Another new advantage that motivates patients is the use of software that can predict the post-treatment appearance of the patient's face and smile.

One of the most important aesthetic advancements in orthodontics is the practice of bonding brackets directly on patients' teeth. Brackets are tiny devices used to attach the main archwire that moves teeth. They are much less noticeable and cleaner than bands.

In the past, individual bands, usually made of stainless steel, were wrapped around and cemented between back teeth. In fact, the success of bonding brackets to molars has improved so much that banding is not usually necessary. As a result, painful "spacers" have largely been eliminated from my practice and others who are utilizing these new techniques.

"Space Age" wires, which have been developed through the NASA space program are made from resilient metals which are more flexible and retain a preformed shape. These super elastic wires are easier for orthodontists to apply and deliver low continuous forces reducing the frequency and overall number of office visits for patients. More importantly, the high tech wires can align teeth with biologically sensible forces, making the orthodontic experience more comfortable and healthier for patients.

While conventional braces consist of brackets that are tightly bound to a wire by way of elastic rings or metal ties, the latest designs, like the Damon System TM, avoid using these high friction connectors. Instead, the new generation Damon braces are designed with miniature doors which allow 400 times less friction. With the doors closed and the wire lying passively inside the braces, the engineers found they had virtually eliminated the friction between the braces and the archwires typically used to straighten teeth. Low friction braces make it possible to use lighter forces to move teeth. Now, an orthodontist can use this mechanical advantage to comfortably achieve more rapid tooth movement in a kinder, healthier way to teeth and the surrounding bone. A more complete explanation with case examples can be viewed online at [www.damonbraces.com](http://www.damonbraces.com).

Now, not only are children enjoying healthier, straighter smiles but many adults are also discovering the new technologies associated with braces and the benefits they have to offer. Laura Meeks was so impressed with her daughter's experience that she elected to enter treatment herself. "I just loved watching the transformation of Madeline's smile and I wanted that improvement for myself. My treatment has made such dramatic difference in my health and appearance, and I just can't believe how quick things are moving without any real discomfort!" Laura's experience is not unlike many adults' who come in for treatment expecting the worst and then finding they can comfortably and efficiently achieve the smile they always wanted in record time. n

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