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**Jonathan Sandler**

## Primum non nocere

Today (2 March 2020), the Oral Health Foundation has teamed up with the British Orthodontic Society to launch the 'Safe Brace Campaign' to help protect the great British public against the onslaught of 'Do It Yourself' braces. This excellent website, **SafeBrace.org**, is the one to which all our patients should be directed for an informed view as to how they can stay safe when considering orthodontic options.

Advice is offered to all patients considering a course of orthodontics and information provided as to what they might expect from a course of treatment. A reasoned argument is put forward as to why it would be wise to have an appropriately qualified clinician fully assess their oral health prior to prescription of any appliances. This comprehensive examination could very well involve radiographs and, particularly in the case of Adult patients, BPE scores and 6 point periodontal charting. Clearly, a simple intra-oral scan or a bunch of selfies and a home-made impression are considered totally inappropriate as the sole method of examining 'fitness for treatment'.

If found to be dentally healthy, their suitability for various types of appliances will need to be considered. Emphasis these days is put on the need for fully informed patient consent, which requires the pros and cons of all the available treatment methods to be fully discussed.

A very useful list of essential questions are suggested on the website and these should be directed towards a clinician before the important treatment decisions can be made. The potential patients are encouraged to consider all the options available to them and hot links to both the Oral Health Foundation and to the British Orthodontic Society are provided.

A week ago, the General Dental Council issued a statement on DIY orthodontics, confirming that, in their view, it was 'the practice of dentistry' and all people delivering this treatment have a requirement to be registered with the GDC. They reiterated the importance of direct contact between a registrant and a potential patient to ensure that all underlying oral health problems were duly considered. They are continuing to gather evidence about patient harm from DIY orthodontics and welcome information on this from all dental professionals.

Page 4 of *The Times* today (2 March 2020) featured a piece on 'Dentists raise the alarm over DIY braces sold online'. Two other National newspapers have shown interest and for sure, this story will run and run . . .