

# When choosing an orthodontist, do your homework...

## What does it take to become an orthodontist?

by Dr. Brad Edgren

**M**any may not realize that orthodontists have a minimum of 10 to 11 years of combined undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate education.

Orthodontists will often graduate with a Bachelors Degree in the sciences. After attending four years of dental school, a prospective orthodontist will apply to an accredited, highly competitive orthodontic specialty program. These specialty programs are two to three years of a full time residency to complete, with the doctor receiving a certificate in orthodontics. Many of these residencies also require their residents to perform research and write a masters thesis. In these

of additional hours outside of the office in preparation to demonstrate appropriate judgement, knowledge, and proper skill set required to provide that highest level of patient care. Orthodontic board certification is achieved through the American Board of Orthodontics. It is the only orthodontic specialty board recognized by the American

Dental Association and affiliated with the American Association of Orthodontists. Board certification is the final piece in an intensive and long educational process to ultimately provide excellent patient care.

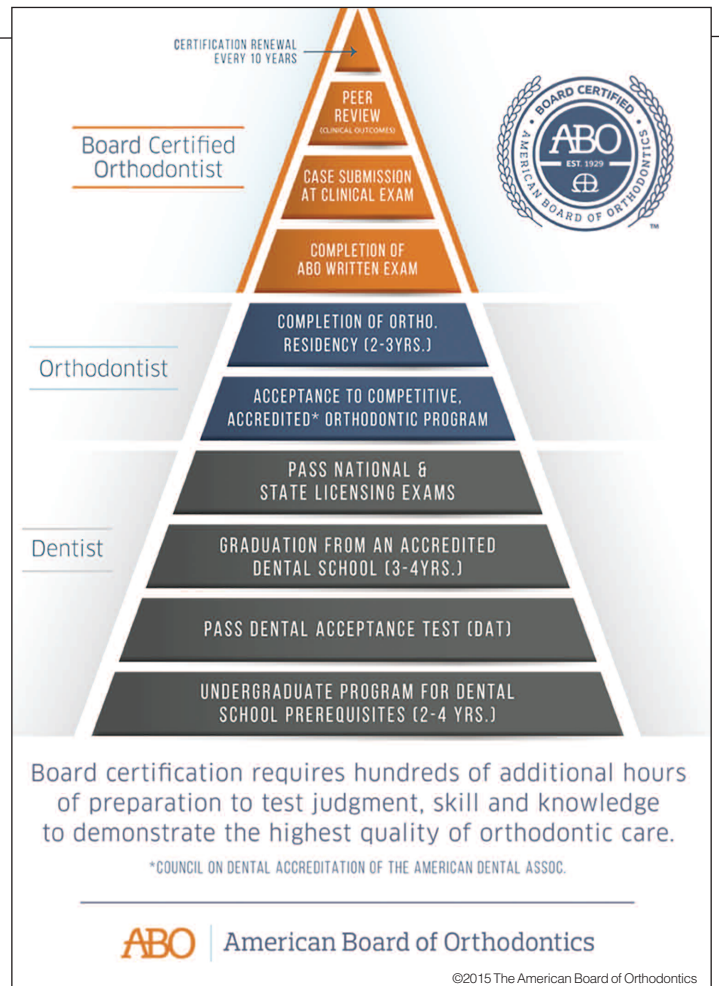
*Note that only 1 in 3 orthodontists are board certified because of the hundreds of additional hours of preparation, study, and cost.*

Note that only 1 in 3 orthodontists are board certified because of the hundreds of additional hours of preparation, study, and cost.

particular programs the orthodontist receives both a certificate and a Masters Degree in recognition of the additional work and training that the resident realized during their tenure.

Following graduation from an orthodontic specialty program, an orthodontist will often take the written exam for board certification. The orthodontist will then take his/her clinical exams within the following 24 months, voluntarily spending hundreds

Orthodontics is more than just braces or straightening teeth. It is important that when the orthodontic treatment is completed that the teeth function together properly. Just having straight teeth does not mean that they fit together properly. When treating the young orthodontic



Orthodontists have a minimum of 10 to 11 years of combined undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate education. Orthodontists will graduate with a Bachelors Degree in the sciences. After attending four years of dental school, a prospective orthodontist will apply to an accredited, highly competitive orthodontic specialty program. These specialty programs are two to three years of a full time residency to complete, with the doctor receiving a certificate in orthodontics.

\*Find a Board Certified Orthodontist: <https://www.americanboardortho.com/portal/public/>

patient it is imperative that the entire facial form including future growth, as well as the teeth, be considered. A properly devised orthodontic treatment plan can provide a smile that will last a lifetime.

Consequently, when choosing an orthodontist, do your homework. Keep in

mind the importance of the specialty program (residency), including the Masters Degree, and board certification. Remember only 1 in 3 orthodontists are board certified. Choose wisely. **G**

Bradford N. Edgren DDS, MS, FACD, Diplomate, American Board of Orthodontics, 3400 W. 16th St. Bldg 4-V, Greeley.