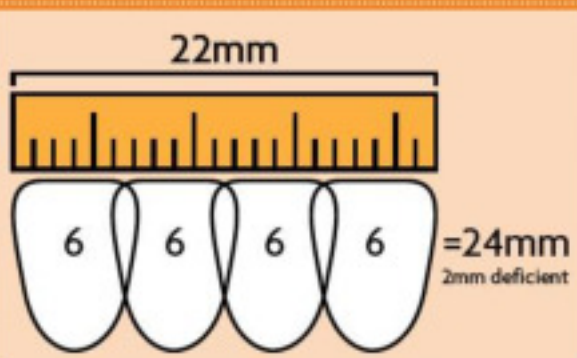
interproximal reduction

You are on your way to a healthy, new smile

To help you achieve it, your orthodontist feels that interproximal reduction is required to create space between the teeth and reduce friction, in order for the teeth to move efficiently. This will contribute to the successful outcome of your orthodontic treatment. It may also contribute to long-term stability of your results after your braces are removed. Interproximal reduction is the removal of some of the outer tooth surface, called enamel, usually between teeth that touch; it has been used in orthodontics since the 1940's. It is also known as slenderising, stripping, enamel reduction, reproximation and selective reduction.

Whatever the name, the intentions are the same – to acquire more space for your teeth, to bring your teeth into alignment, to improve your bite (the way your teeth come together) or to make the teeth more attractive. Sometimes interproximal reduction is done alone, but it is usually done in combination with orthodontic appliance treatment. Sometimes it is even done in conjunction with tooth extractions. Sometimes it is done following orthodontic treatment to establish stability. Many times front teeth are contoured during or after orthodontic treatment to create a balanced and harmonious appearance of teeth. Your orthodontist will recommend enamel reduction if it is a solution to your individual need.



Interproximal reduction is a means by which additional space is acquired for your teeth. It is best compared to a high polish, as the gaps created cannot be seen visually and are only a fraction of a millimetre (0.1mm - 0.5mm maximum). It is not the same as drilling the teeth. This illustration shows how 2mm of space can be gained through the process of interproximal reduction.

Will interproximal reduction damage my teeth or gums?

Front teeth form the framework upon which lips rest. Evaluating facial characteristics through photographs and x-rays is an essential step in orthodontic treatment. Your orthodontist will examine your facial appearance and decide whether or not interproximal reduction is suitable or beneficial.

The primary reason orthodontists choose to perform interproximal reduction on some patients is to reduce the size of the teeth so that they can be aligned properly. Studies among patients who have had interproximal reduction show that the procedure does not make teeth more susceptible to tooth decay nor does the procedure predispose gums to gum disease.



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ClinCheck showing exactly where and how much IPR is required

How does Interproximal reduction work?

1. Your doctor will identify which teeth are to be slenderised and your Invisalign ClinCheck will clearly show you exactly where and how much is required

2. Enamel is removed from the sides of each tooth, where the tooth comes in contact with neighbouring teeth. The enamel may be removed manually or with the aid of a specially-designed dental handpiece.

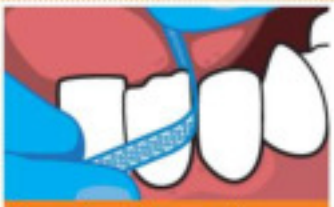
3. Your orthodontist carefully removes the desired amount of enamel, leaving each tooth with sufficient enamel to remain healthy and sound.

4. In performing enamel reduction, the doctor carefully creates needed space that will allow teeth to be placed so that the bite is improved and the teeth take on a pleasing appearance.

5. Desired positioning can be achieved after teeth are slenderised.

Extra space is created when tooth width is reduced. The orthodontist can also shape teeth to create a more attractive appearance.

The tools used in the process



Enamel may be manually removed using diamond strips



The amount removed is measured with thickness gauges



The surface is polished until rounded and smooth

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