

# New technology speeds up braces process

Wendy Rigby - KENS 5 Eyewitness News

A San Antonio orthodontist is using new technology to get his patients in and out of braces faster. It's a combination of computers, robots and space-age wire that speeds up the process.

It's a tradition in [orthodontist Robert Norris'](#) office — the day you get your braces off, you are serenaded.

For eighth-grader Collin Ganci, his entire tooth straightening process took an astoundingly short eight months.

"You know, most of my friends have had them on for a couple of years. And it was great news," he said.

Dr. Norris uses a system called [SureSmile](#) that starts with a 3-D imaging scan of the patient's teeth. He then manipulates the image to look the way he wants it to, and sends the digital information to a lab, where a robot bends a wire to his exact specifications. The memory wire, made out of copper nickel titanium, is able to make subtle movement of the teeth with fewer adjustments and fewer visits.

"If we can treat a patient in, say, nine appointments rather than 20 appointments, well, we've reduced the discomfort level significantly," Norris said.

The national average for braces is slightly more than two years. The average SureSmile patient gets the metal off in 40 percent less time. Although there are fewer wire adjustments and fewer visits, patients get the same outcome — teeth in their proper position. Norris does all of his adult patients and many children this way now — he's used SureSmile on about 400 patients.

"This is our magic bullet, if you will. I think it's the most important and influential advancement in orthodontics, ever," Norris said.

Three San Antonio orthodontists now use the SureSmile system. The cost is about 20 percent above the conventional method.