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Health & Beauty

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Robot dentists deliver teeth braces... with help from Nasa

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Science Editor

ROBOT dentists that can reduce the length of time people have to wear braces are coming to London.

The gadgets, which bend wires developed by Nasa, are to be used outside the US for the first time by Elleven Orthodontics in Harley Street. Experts say they can cut the time patients have to wear braces by 40 per cent.

Dr Anthony Lam, who is pioneering the procedure in Britain, said it also gives 20 per cent better accuracy.

He added: "The patient comes in and we use a 3D scanner to take a picture of their teeth, without the need for awful

moulds. The scans are sent to the US and Germany, where a virtual image in 3D of the patient's mouth is created."

Software analyses what shape the wires need to be in and they are pre-bent using robots designed by a German expert who previously designed car-building robots. "Shape memory means the wire always goes back to its original shape, and delivers gentle forces on the teeth," said Dr Lam.

The procedure costs about 30 per cent more than existing treatments but patients only need to see doctors every eight to 10 weeks, when new wires are fitted.

Snowboard champion Zoe Gillings will be one of the first British patients.