

BRACES AT AGE 7?

FIVE REASONS TO CONSIDER EARLY TREATMENT



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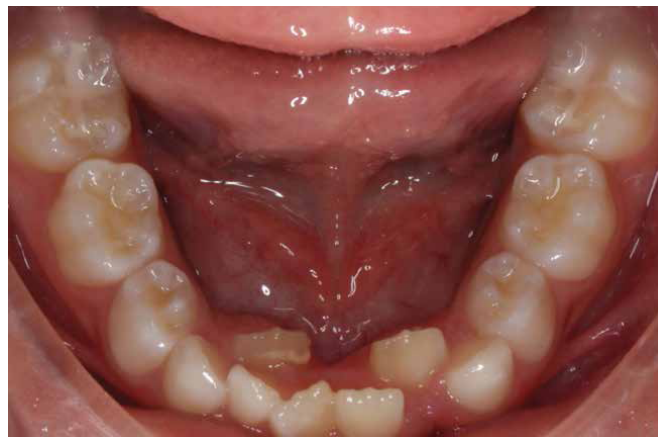
How early is too early?

Most people don't have all their permanent teeth in until they are 12 or 13. However, you may notice some of your child's friends starting braces around second or third grade. Why? Most kids' teeth and jaws have developed to the point where their bite is established by the age of seven. Many of the children we see benefit substantially from early intervention with braces. If treatment is not indicated the orthodontist will monitor your child's growth and development every 6-12 months with periodic recall evaluations until they are ready for braces during adolescence. This is why the American Association of Orthodontists recommends that every child sees

an orthodontist by the age of seven. We understand kids are being seen by their general dentists before this age. However, an orthodontic specialist has received additional training to identify growth patterns and early problems that general dentists simply were not trained to recognize and treat when they were in dental school. Interceptive treatments are those that can improve the effectiveness of your total orthodontic treatment when done at an early age. When indicated, early treatment can help avoid future problems and prevent situations from becoming severe enough to require permanent tooth extractions or jaw surgery.

1 Crowded Teeth

Children with crowded (crooked) teeth may not have enough room for their permanent teeth to come in. If moderate to severe crowding is present an orthodontist can help develop your child's growing jaws and create enough room for all permanent teeth. The longer significant crowding is allowed to remain, the higher the likelihood that extractions or surgical procedures will be required to establish a normal bite when they are older. Your orthodontist can minimize these concerns with early orthodontic treatment.



2 Protruding Teeth

Protruding teeth, often referred to as ‘buck’ teeth, can be caused by a multitude of problems that need to be identified early and correctly. Studies have shown teeth that stick out too far are at a much higher risk of being damaged or knocked out. Early orthodontic treatment can significantly reduce the amount a child’s teeth stick out, reduce the risk of dental trauma, and help direct the growth of the jaws.



3 Crossbites

A crossbite occurs when the upper teeth are inside of the lower teeth. Crossbites can result in abnormal tooth wear and abnormal jaw development that could eventually require surgery to correct as an adult. While these conditions can be corrected as a teenager or even into adulthood, they are far easier to correct when your child is younger.



4 Open Bites

Open bites occur when the upper and lower teeth do not meet when biting. The most common open bite is one that occurs with the front teeth and it is often caused by a thumb/finger sucking habit, improper positioning of the tongue (tongue thrust) or a combination of both. Early orthodontic treatment can both eliminate the habit and correct the open bite. Tongue habits are much easier to correct in a young child.



5 Social Concerns

Let's face it, life as a kid can be tough. Children have the potential to be very hurtful when teasing about looks. In fact, a recent study demonstrated that the number one reason for childhood bullying is related to the appearance of the teeth and their impact on the smile. Your orthodontist can help! Early orthodontic treatment can improve your child's smile and eliminate a significant source of social concern. Many times, waiting until the child is 12 or 13 before starting orthodontic treatment can result in years of teasing and have a negative impact on the child's self-esteem. Out of all the reasons to correct your child's smile, social reasons are the most time-sensitive. Repeated ridicule based on a child's appearance can have a lasting effect on their emotional development. Your orthodontist treats children with these problems every day and can provide you with a solution.

If you have a child around the age of seven or have a specific concern about your child's facial development see an orthodontic specialist to avoid future problems. Many children can wait until they are older to begin orthodontic treatment yet, children with specific problems may truly benefit from early intervention.



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