

# The Benefits of Early Orthodontic Treatment

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When it comes to taking care of your child's oral health, you may think you are doing enough. Getting them to brush twice a day and floss once a day may seem like they are headed in the right direction. But a lot is happening at a level that you can't see, and that development could lead

to dental problems down the road. Did you know that you can actually help your child to avoid and reduce the amount of oral treatment they may need later on? It's true!

Whether you have received an orthodontics referral from your dentist, or you think it would just be a safer route to inquire, it may be time to call and make that first appointment. In addition to brushing and flossing regularly, seeing an orthodontist from an early age may provide huge benefits.

## Getting Started

According to the American Association of Orthodontists, children should have their first appointment with an orthodontist when they are 7 years old. Not many people even think of the

orthodontist when it comes to taking care of their child's teeth. That is, at least, until they notice that there is a problem. By then, there may be more extensive treatment plans that are necessary to address the issues.

By getting your child started in early orthodontic treatment, you may be saving them from years of embarrassing issues associated with their teeth and smile. You may also be helping to reduce or prevent more aggressive necessary treatments later on to address oral issues. An orthodontist can also help to ensure that poor oral habits don't get started or are addressed as soon as they are discovered.

When you get your child started in early orthodontic treatment, the foundation for a healthy mouth and beautiful smile is being laid. The orthodontist can essentially keep an eye on their oral development at every stage and be able to address concerns sooner, rather than later. The more you can do to help guide your child to a healthy smile and teeth, the better off they will be!

## Problem Areas

Having a nice smile gives a child a great deal of confidence. They smile more, feel great doing so, and they avoid feeling ashamed, like some do that have oral problems. Often times, children who suffer from conditions where their teeth are crowded or their bite is off, among other conditions, may be teased or have lower self confidence as a result.



An important condition that early orthodontic treatment can help to address is Class II Malocclusion, which is otherwise known as “buck teeth.” While children who have this condition may grow up being teased and feeling embarrassed, the orthodontist may be able to help correct it through early orthodontic treatment.

Some of the more common early orthodontic treatments that may help children include:

**Braces.** Some children may be able to benefit from having braces, even partial ones, at an early age. They can be used in treating crossbites and preventing damage to supporting structures.

**Palatal Expander.** This is used to treat severe crossbite, when the upper teeth are abnormally located on the inside of the lower teeth, in the reverse relationship than normal.

**Headgear.** This can be used as a treatment for buck teeth or severely protruding front teeth.

**Face Mask.** This is a treatment that can be used for an underbite, where the upper jaw is trapped inside the lower jaw, in the reverse relationship than normal.

Additionally, the orthodontist may perform extractions if there is severe crowding taking place. All in all, seeing an orthodontist can help



Before



After

to ensure that your child will have crooked teeth straightened, and that erupting teeth will be guided into place. They will also watch to make sure that any bite problems are addressed.

### Getting Started

Malocclusion, teeth that are crooked or crowded, is often an inherited condition. Because it usually runs in families, if you have a family history of it, you especially make a prime candidate for getting your child into the orthodontist for early exams and treatment.

Yet heredity issues are not the only way that problems with the teeth occur. Some additional reasons that children may have dental problems include accidents, thumb sucking, or an early loss of their primary teeth. There are many issues that can contribute to your

child having problems with their teeth. But the good news is that they can usually be addressed, even at an early age!

To get started with getting your child into an orthodontist, simply arrange a consultation. The treatments and guidance that they receive today may help save them from years of embarrassment and possibly more intense treatment later. When it comes to children's oral health care, early detection is the key to preventing future problems!

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