## The Right Time for an Orthodontic Check-Up: No Later than Age 7

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends all children get a check-up with an orthodontic specialist no later than age 7.

## Here's Why:

- Orthodontists can spot subtle problems with jaw growth and emerging teeth while some baby teeth are still present.
- While your child's teeth may appear to be straight, there could be a problem that only an orthodontist can detect.
- A check-up may reveal that your child's bite is fine. Or, the orthodontist may identify a
  developing problem but recommend monitoring the child's growth and development, and
  then, if indicated, begin treatment at the appropriate time for the child. In other cases, the
  orthodontist might find a problem that can benefit from early treatment.
- Early treatment may prevent or intercept more serious problems from developing and may make
  treatment at a later age shorter and less complicated. In some cases, the orthodontist will be
  able to achieve results that may not be possible once the face and jaws have finished growing.
- Early treatment may give your orthodontist the chance to:

Guide jaw growth

Lower the risk of trauma to protruded front teeth

Correct harmful oral habits

Improve appearance

Guide permanent teeth into a more favorable position

Create a more pleasing arrangement of teeth, lips and face

• Through an early orthodontic evaluation, you'll be giving your child the best opportunity for a healthy, beautiful smile.

If your child is older than 7, it's certainly not too late for a check-up.

Because patients differ in both physiological development and treatment needs, the orthodontist's goal is to provide each patient with the most appropriate treatment at the most appropriate time.



## Problems to Watch for in Growing Children

Malocclusions ("bad bites") like those illustrated below, may benefit from early diagnosis and referral to an orthodontic specialist for a full evaluation.



**Crossbite of Front Teeth** 

Top teeth are behind bottom teeth



**Crossbite of Back Teeth** 

Top teeth are to the inside of bottom teeth



Crowding



**Open Bite** 

Front teeth do not meet when back teeth are closed



**Protrusion** 



**Deep Bite** 

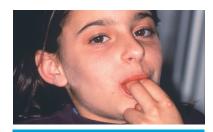


**Underbite** 

The lower teeth sit in front of upper teeth when back teeth are closed



**Spacing** 



**Oral Habits** 

Sucking on thumb, fingers

## In addition, if you notice any of the following in your child, check with your orthodontist:

- early or late loss of baby teeth
- difficulty in chewing or biting
- mouth breathing
- jaws that shift or make sounds

- speech difficulties
- biting the cheek or the roof of the mouth
- · facial imbalance
- grinding or clenching of the teeth

Final treatment decisions should be made among the parent, child's dentist and orthodontist.