
American Association of Orthodontists Recommendation For Early Orthodontic Check-Ups

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ORTHODONTISTS RECOMMENDS THAT ALL CHILDREN HAVE A CHECK-UP WITH AN ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST NO LATER THAN AGE 7.

Why evaluate no later than age 7?

- The posterior occlusion is established when the first molars erupt. At that time, one can evaluate the antero-posterior and transverse relationships of the occlusion, as well as discover any functional shifts.
- Incisors have begun to erupt and problems can be detected such as crowding, habits, deep bites, open bites and some facial asymmetries.
- For some, a timely evaluation will lead to significant treatment benefits; for most, the principal immediate benefit is a parent's peace of mind.
- The dentist who makes timely referrals is rightly regarded as informed, caring and concerned for the total well-being of the patient.

The Benefits of Early Treatment

For those patients who have clear indications for early intervention, early treatment presents the opportunity to:

- Influence jaw growth in a positive manner
- Harmonize width of the dental arches
- Improve eruption patterns
- Lower risk of trauma to protruded upper incisors
- Correct harmful oral habits
- Improve aesthetics and self-esteem
- Simplify and/or shorten treatment time for later corrective orthodontics
- Reduce likelihood of impacted permanent teeth
- Improve some speech problems
- Preserve or gain space for erupting permanent teeth

An early orthodontic evaluation can ease a parent's concerns about crooked teeth or facial development and about orthodontic treatment. Some conditions are best treated early for biological, social or practical reasons, whereas others should be deferred. Final treatment decisions should be made among the parent, general dentist and orthodontist.

