

Good Dental Health Starts Early

As a parent, you want the best for your child. That includes healthy teeth and a pleasing smile.

Start with regular dental care. The American Dental Association recommends that a child visit the dentist by his or her first birthday, while baby (primary) teeth are emerging. Your dentist can alert you to any concerns about how the teeth and jaws are developing. But sometimes parents are the first to recognize a problem with the alignment of teeth and jaws.

All Kids Should Get a Check-up with an Orthodontist No Later Than Age 7

To have a healthy smile that's good for life®, your child needs teeth and jaws that are properly aligned. The American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) recommends that your child get a check-up with an orthodontist at the first recognition of the existence of an orthodontic problem, but no later than age 7. By then, your child has enough permanent teeth for an orthodontist to determine whether an orthodontic problem exists or is developing. Putting off a check-up with an orthodontist until a child has lost all baby teeth could be a disservice. Some orthodontic problems may be easier to correct if they're found early. A check-up no later than age 7 gives your orthodontist the opportunity to recommend the appropriate treatment at the appropriate time. If early treatment is in order, the orthodontist may be able to achieve results that may not be possible once the face and jaws have finished growing.

Orthodontists receive an additional two to three years of specialized education beyond dental school to learn the proper way to align and straighten teeth. Only those who successfully complete this formal education may call themselves "orthodontists," and only orthodontists can be members of the American Association of Orthodontists.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout your treatment or in the future, please consult your orthodontist or visit mylifemysmile.org.

American Association of Orthodontists®

My Life. My Smile. My Orthodontist.®

American Association of Orthodontists
401 North Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63141-7816
314.993.1700
mylifemysmile.org
Email: info@aaortho.org

© 2013 American Association of Orthodontists.

Your Child's First Orthodontic Check-up

No Later than Age 7



American Association of Orthodontists®

My Life. My Smile. My Orthodontist.®

A Lifetime of Benefits

Choosing the Optimal Time for Treatment – Consult an Orthodontist

While orthodontic treatment most often begins between the ages of 9 and 14, some children's orthodontic problems can benefit from earlier treatment. If it appears that your child will need treatment at some point, your orthodontist can advise you about the best time to begin. If early treatment is indicated, it can give your orthodontist the chance to:

- Guide jaw growth
- Lower the risk of trauma to protruded front teeth
- Correct harmful oral habits
- Improve appearance and self-esteem
- Guide permanent teeth into a more favorable position
- Improve the way lips meet





Orthodontists Can Spot Subtle Problems

Signs the Bite's Not Right

It's not always easy to tell when your child has an orthodontic problem. Even teeth that look straight may be hiding an unhealthy bite. Here are some clues that may indicate the need for orthodontic attention:

- Early or late loss of baby teeth
- Difficulty in chewing or biting
- Breathing through the mouth
- Thumb-sucking
- Crowded, misplaced or blocked-out teeth
- Jaws that are too far forward or back
- Biting the cheek or biting into the roof of the mouth
- Protruding teeth
- Upper and lower teeth that don't meet, or meet in an abnormal way
- An unbalanced facial appearance
- Grinding or clenching of the teeth

Give Your Child the Gift of a Healthy Smile

Well-aligned teeth look good and feel good. They contribute to good dental health and the ability to speak, chew and bite. Poorly aligned teeth can lead to dental problems. Not everyone needs orthodontic treatment. But if your child does need help, a check-up no later than age 7 will help your orthodontist provide the most appropriate treatment at the most appropriate time. Make sure your child sees an orthodontist for a check-up no later than age 7.

