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.

Visit the American Association of Orthodontists website at aaoinfo.org

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.

Doctor Antony Chinhara
Harare Office:
52 East road
Belgravia, Harare
Tel: +263 242 333 441/2
Cell:+263 712 210 933

Bulawayo Office:
Zonkizizwe Shopping Centre
suites 10 & 11 (Upstairs)
Hillside road, Bradfield Bulawayo
Tell: +263 292 881 332
Cell: +263 712 403 296

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