

Early Treatment

When most people think of orthodontics, they only think of the actual “braces” that are typically placed to straighten permanent teeth. However, one of the crucial roles that orthodontics plays is the treatment done during a child’s early years, before all the permanent teeth have come in.

There are many specific reasons to consider early (Phase 1) orthodontic intervention for children. The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that every child have a check up with an orthodontic specialist no later than age 7. Occasionally, children as young as 4 to 6 are treated for certain orthodontic problems such as underbites. Needs for individual children vary, so the following reasons should be considered:

‘Window of opportunity’ during growth

Certain jaw movements, such as widening of the upper jaw, should be done prior to fusion of the upper jaw bones which typically starts at age 8. Often by the time all the permanent teeth erupt, the procedures that would have required minimal growth modification during earlier years may require jaw surgery and/or extraction of permanent teeth and may result in compromised treatment results.

Decrease need to extract permanent teeth in the future

Your child’s jaws continue to grow to accommodate room for their back molars and wisdom teeth. However, contrary to what most parents might think, the space for your child’s front teeth is at its maximum at age 4. Between ages 4 and 12, about 4-8 mm of space (the width of a tooth) is lost naturally by the back teeth moving forward.

Early treatment minimizes extracting permanent teeth by allowing Dr. Hoss to modify the shape of the jaw, create more room and preserve needed space when primary teeth are still present.

Avoid or reduce need for facial/oral surgery later on

Decrease the chance of impacted (i.e. stuck, not erupting normally) teeth that may require future oral surgery.

Dr. Hoss can often eliminate the risk of future facial surgery with early treatment—at a time when a child’s facial growth can be modified.

Correct harmful habits

Habits such as thumb-sucking or tongue-thrusting can not only interfere with proper speech and chewing, but they can also cause problems that, if untreated as a young child, could require jaw surgery later in life.

Decrease risk of tooth trauma

Research shows that early treatment could reduce the risk of trauma to protruded front teeth.

Improve psychological factors

Improved facial esthetics positively affects your child’s outlook and attitude by increasing self-confidence and protecting him/her from being seen by peers as different.

As adults, we forget how unforgiving children are to others who appear “different” from them when it comes to their appearance and/or speech. When we improve the appearance and function of children earlier in life, we help to increase their self-esteem.

Increase compliance

Younger patients tend to be more compliant and cooperative.

Maximize benefits of orthodontics

Having a solid foundation provides final orthodontic results (Phase 2) that are optimal with better stability and ideal facial esthetics.

When all the facts are considered, the importance of early orthodontic treatment for young children becomes clear. Should you know someone who could use Dr. Hoss’ help, please feel free to give them our phone number: (619)DENTIST [336-8478]. Your referrals are always welcome.



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