

SPECIAL REPORT



DOES YOUR CHILD REALLY NEED BRACES?



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AGE 7: YOUR CHILD'S FIRST VISIT TO THE ORTHODONTIST



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4 HOW SOON CAN WE TELL

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that your child visit the orthodontist by the age of 7.

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Let's start off with a list of 10 possible problems just to name a few that require intervention or monitoring at an early age.

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Most children do not need early orthodontic treatment. However, the only way to detect problems early is with an orthodontic evaluation.

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Orthodontists are specialists that have received 2-3 years of additional training beyond dental school. They are uniquely qualified to identify, diagnose, and treat all conditions related to alignment of the teeth and jaws.

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It is in the best interest of your child to put braces on at the "ideal" time. This means, you should work with an orthodontist to monitor your child's teeth.

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By offering a multitude of payment options we will fulfill our mission of providing affordable care to our patients in need.



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ABOUT THIS SPECIAL REPORT

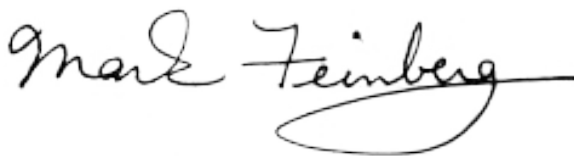
Dear Friend,

First let me congratulate you for taking the first step in seeking more information and finding an answer to your question. It is my hope this special report will provide you with a better understanding of how orthodontic care and braces help your child achieve both a great looking smile, and a healthy one as well.

As an orthodontist, I get many questions from parents just like you, who are not sure if their child needs braces, if they should see an orthodontist, and of course many other questions related to teeth and smiles. In this special report, I have addressed some of the most common concerns and questions that parents share with me. Throughout the report's pages, you will discover how early we can tell if your child needs braces, what can go wrong at an early age, how many patients benefit from early treatment, why you should choose a specialist, and how to pay for braces, in the event your child needs them.

Please feel free to contact my office with any questions or to schedule an exam for your child.

Sincerely,



Mark Feinberg DMD

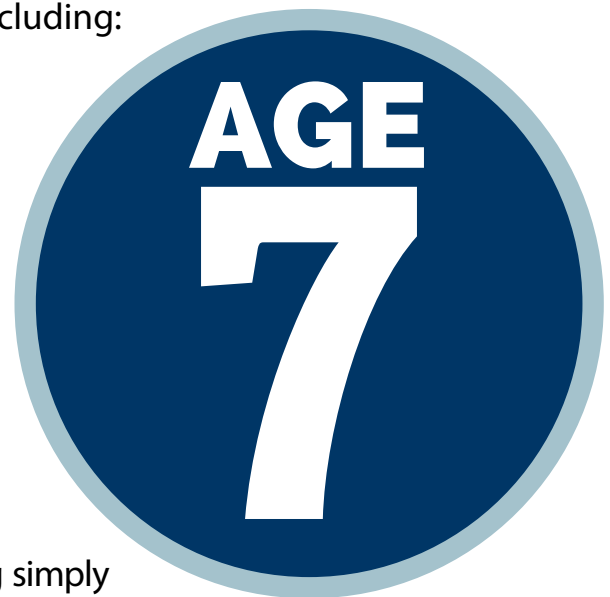
HOW EARLY CAN WE DETERMINE IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS BRACES?

Parents frequently ask this very important question, how early we can tell if a child needs braces. The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that an orthodontic check-up should occur no later than age 7. This is a critical step in helping to ensure that your child's teeth are off to a great start and that they will have a healthy and attractive smile that will last a lifetime.

Orthodontic specialists are uniquely qualified to properly assess your child in their early developmental years. Typically, for most 7 year olds, their first visit is nothing more than an exam. However, for others, seemingly small problems may be diagnosed that are associated with the way permanent teeth are emerging or jaw growth imbalances. "Interceptive orthodontics" for this small number of children, typically 5 to 10 percent, can be quite beneficial. Sometimes there are potentially significant problems that we find and address, including:

- Jaw alignment problems
- Impacted teeth
- Chipped or fractured teeth
- Gum tissue recession

By addressing these issues described above, we also help to alleviate social issues, where children may be the victim of teasing or bullying simply because of the appearance of their teeth. A child's teeth and smile can have a major impact on their well being as they grow. With a beautiful smile, they are more likely to be confident and social, as well as gain a host of health benefits.



WHAT CAN GO WRONG AT AN EARLY AGE?

As a parent, you may believe that you can look at your child and see if there is a problem with their bite. If the problem is very obvious, than perhaps it will be possible. However, in most instances it is prudent to rely on the trained eyes of a specialist to detect a problem. And this is why it is important for a child to see an orthodontist for an exam.

Here are some of the possible problems that can go wrong at an early age:

- Thumb-sucking
- Difficulty with chewing or breathing
- Early or late loss of baby teeth
- Teeth that are crowded, misplaced, or have been blocked out
- Upper and lower teeth that do not meet properly
- Improper jaw alignment
- Impacted teeth
- Crossbites
- Severe crowding, with stripping of the teeth through the gum tissue
- Tongue thrusting and grinding or clenching of teeth



Missing problems early may also limit treatment options and require a more complex and involved treatment approach over an unnecessary extended period of time. Taking your child to the orthodontist by the age of 7 gives you the best head start on identifying and addressing any problems, so your child can have a healthy, beautiful smile!

As you can see, there is quite a bit that can go wrong, even at an early age. The best way to provide yourself with peace of mind, and your child with a great smile, is to schedule a visit with the orthodontist by the age of 7. The majority of children don't require necessary early treatment until at least the age of 9. However, it's vitally important to catch problems early so they can be corrected more easily and will not lead to more complicated problems as time goes on.

HOW MANY PATIENTS BENEFIT FROM EARLY TREATMENT

By now, you may be wondering whether all children will need to have orthodontic treatment at an early age. This is simply not the case, so there is no need to anguish over all the “what ifs” associated with helping your child get, and keep, a healthy and beautiful smile. In my greater than 30 years of orthodontic experience, we have examined many children and found that the number of them needing treatment by age 7 is very low.

In fact, out of the roughly 10,000 orthodontic patients we have seen, less than 10 percent of them have required treatment this early. Keep in mind that while it's less than 10 percent for the number of children we see, this number can vary. It is dependent on such factors as geographic location and ethnicity.

So in general, most children do not require early orthodontic treatment. Early detection of orthodontic problems with a routine screening of your child by age 7, is essential to determine if they fall into that 10 percent or the 90 percent category.

Like most other health problems that can arise, early detection is the best way to address them. Therefore, if your child has not yet seen the orthodontist, now is the time for an examination.



WHY CHOOSE A SPECIALIST?

This question is often considered; why not take my child to their general dentist rather than seeing a specialist? While a dentist plays an important role providing essential care of your child's teeth, it is simply not enough. An exam by a specialist is critical to ensuring that nothing is overlooked and that the best possible treatments are effectively selected and carried out.

To understand why an orthodontic specialist is recommended, it is important to know what an orthodontist is and what they do. Orthodontists have completed an additional 2-3 years of education beyond the basic dental degree. They are able to take a more in-depth approach at diagnosing and treating any orthodontic issues your child may have.



Their area of specialty and what they have intensely studied is learning all about the proper way to align the teeth and jaws, assess facial growth and development and analyze facial esthetics.

Through the additional training that an orthodontist has had, they are able to identify dental irregularities, expertly diagnose conditions and determine an appropriate course of treatment. There are so many more treatment methods that are available today than in the past. As a specialist, an orthodontist is able to identify, diagnose, and treat such conditions as:

- Difficulty with chewing, biting, or teeth that abnormally meet
- Grinding and clenching teeth
- Early or late loss of teeth
- Crowding, misplaced, or blocked-out teeth
- Speech difficulty
- Biting in to the roof of the mouth or the cheek
- Teeth that protrude
- Facial imbalances

WHAT IF MY CHILD REALLY DOESN'T NEED BRACES?

Perhaps your child has experienced some of the conditions that have been mentioned. Or maybe you detected a dental issue that made you think your child may need braces. After a screening visit with the orthodontist you are advised that your child doesn't need orthodontic treatment now, but periodic monitoring is suggested. So where does this type of scenario leave you? Quite simply, it means you should work with an orthodontist to monitor your child's teeth! Treatment might be indicated later in life if the orthodontist detects any problems in future jaw growth or your child might simply be a candidate for retainers to maintain a healthy smile.

We highly recommend seeing our younger patients every 3-6 months to monitor growth; referred to as "observation and supervision." This will provide important information about any possible developmental problems that may arise, involving tooth eruption, jaw growth, etc. Continuing regular orthodontic check-ups is a part of a healthy lifestyle.



The best practice, when it comes to putting braces on a child's teeth, is to do it at the "ideal time". The only way to pinpoint the ideal time is to continue with regular exams. These beneficial "peace of mind" visits are complimentary in our practice, so there is no need to worry about incurring an orthodontic expense at each of these appointments.

We base the "ideal" time for orthodontic intervention on the contemporary body of scientific evidence and literature. Our treatment approach to children is conservative, the vast majority of children do not require braces at a very young age---simple guidance and interception are all that is indicated. Zeroing in on the ideal time will conserve everyone's time and energy and ultimately will reduce the overall length of the treatment. This is an important benefit because less treatment time helps to minimize the decalcification or white spots, gum disease, sore teeth, and all the other problems that can occur when braces are left on the teeth too long.



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HOW DO I PAY FOR MY CHILD'S BRACES?



How to pay for braces is one of the most common questions that I receive from parents. This is an understandable concern. We realize many families do not have dental insurance that will take care of the associated costs. Even those who have dental insurance may find that it covers only a portion of their child's orthodontic expenses. However having braces is such an important issue, that if it is recommended by your orthodontist that your child have them, you should do everything possible to obtain them.

Getting braces is more than just an aesthetics issue although that is also important. If your child's teeth are crowded &/or bite misaligned, it can make it difficult to clean them properly and may cause speech problems. So receiving the prescribed orthodontic treatment for their condition is essential. Braces are a great investment in your child's future health and welfare as an unhealthy dentition can be both medically and financially costly.

Orthodontic procedures, like most other medical procedures, may cost several thousands of dollars, because of all the work involved. If your child needs braces, it can cost anywhere from \$5,000-10,000. The good news is that there are options for those who do not have the funds readily available to pay for the treatment.

Here are a few payment options to consider:

FLEX SPENDING ACCOUNTS - Many people are able to afford braces and other orthodontic treatment through the help of a Flex Spending Account (FSA). These accounts are set up through your place of employment and allow you to take pre-tax dollars to set aside and use for medical expenses. Because you never know when you may need this additional financial assistance, it's a good idea to get the FSA account started now. That way when you need it, the funds will be there.



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HOW DO I PAY FOR MY CHILD'S BRACES? (CONT.)

FINANCING - Third party financing for orthodontic treatment may also be a solid option. Whether it is a loan with family and friends or a personal loan obtained through a financial institution, you may be able to qualify for low interest loans that allow you to get the work done that your child needs, and you can spread the payments out over a comfortable period of time.

PAYMENT PLANS - Speak with your orthodontist, as most do offer some type of payment plan that will allow you to make monthly payments for treatment services. This is usually a service provided that is free of interest, and they are flexible in working with you to ensure you have a comfortable payment amount each month.

Paying for your child's orthodontic treatment may be a concern, but you shouldn't let it discourage you. The payment options are there to help you so that you can help your child. When you help your child get braces or other orthodontic treatment that they may need, you will be helping them more than you could possibly realize. As a child, I needed braces and how especially fortunate I was, that my dad was an orthodontist. The braces experience was so much more than just fixing my teeth and giving me a great smile. Quite candidly, the braces proved to be truly life changing.

Not only did getting braces as a child help me to be more confident, outgoing, and more socially accepted, but it also made me realize just how important something like a smile is in the bigger picture.

Observing the incredibly positive impact that dad's care had on his patients and witnessing the benefits of braces first hand for myself, choosing orthodontics as my career was the best decision I could ever have made. How incredibly satisfying to have an opportunity to transform a young person's life.



Braces may not seem life changing when you are not the one needing them, but I can assure you that for those who need them, it's an incredibly satisfying feeling they get when treatment has been completed, and they can look in the mirror and love their smile. And that's just the aesthetic benefits. There are many health related benefits as well, for those who work with an orthodontist to address dental issues early on.

When choosing an orthodontist to work with, opt for one that has a wealth of verifiable experience and has successfully treated and worked with thousands of children, and one that your child feels comfortable with. Depending on the treatment needed, your child may see the orthodontist regularly for several years.

I hope that you have found this special report helpful in answering some of your questions regarding whether or not your child needs braces. While I can provide some answers here to the most common questions, the best way for me to determine if your child needs braces is to schedule a complimentary exam.

We are ready when you are, so please call my office today to set up an appointment for your child's initial exam. We have helped countless other children, and by seeing your child by the time they are 7 years old, we can help ensure dental health that will give them a healthy and beautiful smile for a lifetime!



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