



## Is Early Treatment Worthwhile?

### 1. *What Is Early Treatment?*

In our practice, we find that approximately 35 percent of our patients can benefit from some form of early treatment. Early treatment can prevent more serious problems from developing and can make a second phase of treatment shorter and less complicated.

Early treatment involves the use of orthodontic appliances, or partial braces, to guide the growth of developing jaw bones and create a better environment for the adult teeth as they emerge.

In most cases, this early phase of treatment is followed by comprehensive orthodontic treatment (full braces) at the appropriate age. This second phase of treatment is usually shorter, less involved, and more effective due to the earlier treatment. This is usually referred to as “two phase” orthodontic therapy.

In most of these cases, we can achieve results that wouldn't be possible once the face and jaws have finished growing. Early treatment gives us the chance to:

- Guide jaw growth.
- Lower the risk of trauma to protruded front teeth.
- Correct harmful habits like thumb sucking, tongue thrusting, lip biting.
- Improve appearance and self-esteem.
- Allow for more favorable eruption of permanent teeth.
- Correct crossbites.

### 2. *The American Association Of Orthodontists Recommendation:*

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children should have an orthodontic evaluation by age 7. An experienced orthodontist can usually see by age seven whether developmental issues can turn into problems. Early detection of common orthodontic problems such as crowding, premature loss of baby teeth, crossbites, or many other unfavorable developmental issues can lead to the implementation of the most appropriate treatment. In many cases, the need for permanent tooth extractions can be eliminated.

Frequently, no early intervention will be necessary, except careful monitoring of your child's dental development. This will give you peace of mind when it is not clear to you whether an issue you see is really a problem or just a stage of development that doesn't require intervention.

### **3. What Are The Indications For Early Treatment?**

The patient would benefit from early treatment if any of the following are present:

- Early or late loss of baby teeth
- Breathing through the mouth
- Thumb sucking
- Crowded, misplaced or blocked-out teeth
- Jaws that are too far forward or back
- Front teeth that do not meet, or meet in an abnormal way
- An unbalanced facial appearance

### **4. How Does My Child Benefit From Early Treatment?**

Dr. Menold has found the most effective Phase 1 treatments are the following:

**Palatal Expansion**—Early expansion fixes crossbites, and makes room for teeth which might not erupt on their own. Early expansion also eliminates lower jaw shifts, which, if left as is, can cause the lower jaw to grow off to one side.

**Maxillary Protraction**—Most underbites are caused by the upper jaw (maxilla) not growing forward as it should. In a young child, these maxillary bones are easy to reshape. Maxillary protraction can make this upper jaw move forward to correct the young patient's bite, and profile.

**Partial Braces**—Can be applied to the four front teeth if they are very crooked in a 7- to 9-year-old patient. These can be repositioned relatively quickly, improving the patient's appearance, and also creating room for the posterior (back) teeth that will erupt in the future.

**Space Maintenance**—Space maintainers are passive appliances that if placed at the correct time, can assist the eruption of the posterior permanent teeth, causing them to erupt much straighter than they normally would.

**Serial Extraction**—The removal of baby teeth when space is not adequate in the mouth can allow the permanent teeth to erupt more favorably and shorten the time of treatment when braces are placed.

**The majority of our early patient visits result in observation only—at no cost to the parent.**

### **5. Why Didn't My Dentist Mention That?**

To seek treatment from an orthodontic specialist, you do not need to be referred by your general dentist. The fact of the matter is that the art and science of orthodontics involves years of specialized orthodontic training. An orthodontic specialist makes many of their decisions regarding appropriate care, based on expertise they have acquired after having reviewed treatment on hundreds, if not thousands, of orthodontic patients.

On the other hand, most family dentists are very busy taking care of teeth and gum issues that affect the health of the mouth. While your dentist is busy caring for your family's dental health, let Dr. Menold shape that beautiful smile. During a complimentary initial orthodontic evaluation, we will assess the need for orthodontics for your family.

If you are waiting for your dentist to refer you to the orthodontist, you may be waiting too long. Many times a simple procedure done at a young age can save months, or even years, of treatment time at a later age. If you're wondering, "**Why hasn't that tooth come in?**" or "**Will that space close?**", perhaps you should see us.

**"What do you mean my child needs braces... I thought her teeth were beautiful?"** Parents sometimes find out too late that orthodontic problems are present. Impactions and bite problems are issues that may not be obvious to the naked eye. Diagnostic tools, such as panoramic x-rays, allow your orthodontist to foresee potential problems now, before your child's teeth are visible. This also allows appropriate preventive measures to be implemented to correct the problem quickly and as cost-effectively as possible.

**“But, don’t you need to wait for all the teeth to come in?”** Early orthodontic evaluation, and appropriately-timed observation visits, will eliminate the questions and surprises that can surface when children don’t see an orthodontist until they are older. **Remember, the American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children receive an orthodontic evaluation by age 7.**

**6. How Do I Have My Child Evaluated By The Doctors At Brookstone Orthodontics?**

**The first step is to call our office to set up a free initial screening. You can also send an e-mail request from our website and we will call you.**

**This screening appointment usually takes 15-30 minutes. Our goal is to provide you with the following information:**

- We will identify your child’s orthodontic problems.
- We can pinpoint the best time to start treatment.
- We can estimate the duration of treatment.
- We can demonstrate the types of appliances that will be necessary.
- We can discuss the cost, and payment options.

**Sometimes, the Doctor will suggest taking photos and a panoramic x-ray in order to provide you with all of this information.**

**7. True Or False?**

In order for my child to start with braces, all of their baby teeth need to fall out first. FALSE

As soon you notice something unusual about your child’s smile, you should see an Orthodontic specialist. TRUE

You should wait for your family dentist to refer you to an orthodontist. FALSE

Orthodontic treatment is an investment in your child’s future. TRUE

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