

BRACES AT AGE 7

Is that too early to start orthodontics?



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Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics
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Dr. Manal Ibrahim of Innovative Orthodontic Centers states that “early orthodontic treatment can have an incredible psychological effect on a child, giving them much more confidence than ever before”. According to the American Association of Orthodontists, every 7-year-old should be evaluated by an orthodontist. Detecting and treating problems early on improves the child’s development, function, and appearance. Not only does this treatment affect their current dental condition, it also improves future development of the jaws and eruption of the teeth.

Dr. Ibrahim believes in early treatment of orthodontic problems and has seen remarkable changes in the children she has treated. She uses state-of-the-art braces and innovative orthodontic techniques to achieve these results. At the consultation visit, a thorough examination will reveal whether a 7-year-old needs orthodontic treatment. She looks for very specific dental and developmental issues and if they are present, treatment is encouraged. Treatment usually involves braces and sometimes an appliance such as an expander. She aims to achieve all of the goals of treatment within a 12 month period. At the end of treatment, all the appliances are removed and the patient is given retainers. For the years to follow, the patient comes in for retainer adjustments and to be monitored during development in order to assess if future treatment will be necessary.

The goals of early treatment focus on the following:

- Make more room for the permanent teeth to erupt so they are as straight as possible.
- Keep a bad bite from occurring in an otherwise normal mouth.
- Guide the jaws to grow in the proper direction.
- Lower the risk of trauma to teeth that are protruded (stick out).
- Correct a harmful oral habit such as thumb sucking.
- Improve appearance and self-esteem.
- Improve the way lips meet.

Thumb-Sucking

A thumb-sucking habit can cause narrowing of the upper jaw, a gap to occur between the front teeth, and an open bite relationship of the front teeth. By placing an appliance in the patient’s mouth at the age of 7, the habit was stopped, the gap between the upper front two teeth closed, the upper jaw widened out and the open bite between the upper and lower front teeth also closed. Now the patient is in a much better position for development of the rest of the permanent teeth.



Underbite

Patients that have an underbite end up chipping their upper and lower front teeth. Often times they have a speech problem, crowding, and no room for all the permanent teeth to erupt properly. By using braces at the age of 8, this patient’s crossbite of the front teeth was totally eliminated, creating more room in the upper jaw, allowing the upper front teeth to erupt and align properly. The patient ended up with a much nicer smile, improved speech and a better bite which protects the front teeth from further damage.



Overbite

When the upper and lower jaws grow at different rates, sometimes it will look like the upper teeth are “bucked out”. This happens when the lower jaw is left behind. At the age of 7, jaw growth can be guided in a certain direction. In this case, the bite was so deep that the patient was biting on the roof of his mouth, creating constant irritation. Because of the bucked out teeth, self-confidence was poor and the teeth were at risk for trauma. A special appliance and braces were used to help the lower jaw come forward and match up with the upper jaw, which is in a good position. The “overbite” is eliminated, the smile is enhanced greatly, and the patient’s self-esteem was boosted beyond the imagination. At the end of treatment, this patient’s jaws were very well aligned and now the future permanent teeth should erupt in a good relationship.



This is a very small sampling of the amazing treatment from which young patients can benefit tremendously at Innovative Orthodontic Centers. We pride ourselves in our ability to enhance patients’ smiles, health, and function for life. Offering braces and invisalign® for adults and children, Innovative Orthodontic Centers has three locations to better suit your needs.



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