

What age should my child see a dentist or an orthodontist?

The current recommendations are that children should see a dentist by the age of 3. The dentist will check

- You are welcome to bring your child for their first dental visit once their first tooth arrives or around their first birthday.
- That all primary (baby) teeth have erupted.
- That these teeth are healthy.
- That the teeth are in their correct position. If teeth or jaws are not in correct position treatment would not be indicated but a plan to monitor development would be put in place. The optimum time for treatment, if indicated, could then be established.
- Give advice for care of child's teeth and gums.
- Advise on use of fluoride and other preventative treatments.

The current recommendations are that children should see an orthodontist at the age of 7.

- Most children have a mix of adult and child teeth by the age of 7. Orthodontist can spot some patterns of dental development and jaw growth around this age. While most orthodontic treatment starts between 10 to 14 years of age occasionally earlier treatment can be indicated
- Even if problems are detected quite often immediate treatment is not indicated. A plan can be developed to wait for the optimum age of treatment. This age will vary for each individual child.
- If early treatment is indicated this would typically be to prevent more serious problems from developing and may make treatment at a later age shorter and less complicated.
- Early treatment gives the orthodontist a chance to
 - ✚ Guide jaw growth
 - ✚ Reduce the exposure of prominent teeth to accidental trauma.
 - ✚ Correct harmful habits
 - ✚ Improve appearance and self esteem
 - ✚ Create space and guide permanent teeth into a more favourable position
 - ✚ Improve the way lips meet

What if my child is older?

- Most active orthodontic treatment starts between ages 10 and 14, so the earlier they attend the better.

- It is not always possible to tell if your child has an orthodontic problem. Even teeth that look straight may be hiding a problem bite. Some clues that may indicate a problem include:
 - ✚ Early or late loss of baby teeth
 - ✚ Difficulty in chewing or biting
 - ✚ Mouth breathing
 - ✚ Thumb sucking
 - ✚ Crooked, misplaced or blocked out teeth.
 - ✚ Jaws that are too far back or forward
 - ✚ Biting the cheek or into the roof of mouth
 - ✚ Protruding teeth
 - ✚ Upper and lower teeth that don't meet or meet in an abnormal way.
 - ✚ An unbalance facial appearance.

It's never too late to get started

Orthodontic can be successful at almost any age. In fact one in four patients receiving orthodontic treatment is now over the age of 18. Thanks to today's smaller, more comfortable, less visible brackets are more appealing to adults.