

ORTHODONTIC TIMES

CHOOSING AN ORTHODONTIST

What Every Mom
Needs to Know

THUMB SUCKING AND PACIFIER USE

Help Your Child
Break the Habit

Tips for Getting
Your Child to
**BRUSH
AND FLOSS**

Tips for a
**HEALTHY
MOUTH**

Volume 4 • Issue 2

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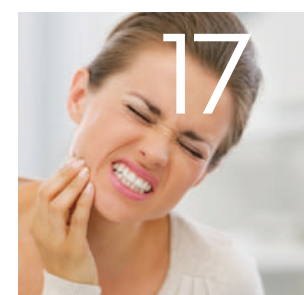
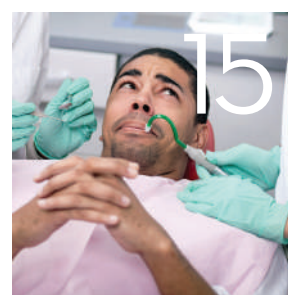
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Tips for a **HEALTHY MOUTH**

If you think about it, your mouth is one of the parts of your body that is almost always in constant use. You use it to eat, talk, breathe, etc., and if it is diseased or has been afflicted with a variety of health problems, it can be quite embarrassing and limiting. When you have a tooth ache or canker sore, for example, not much else seems to matter! Because of this, and so much more, having a healthy mouth is essential to your well-being, confidence and your overall wellness.

Benefits and Beyond

There are many problems that can arise by not taking the time to strive for a healthy mouth. Gingivitis, which is a type of periodontal disease, destroys a person's gums, the surrounding tissue, and even the tooth sockets. To prevent things like dental carries or cavities, as well as gingivitis, it is important to maintain a healthy mouth. And doing so is actually easier than you may think, providing you keep a few things in mind!

Throughout the years, there are various tips for the ages and stages that people go through, with things all along the way that contribute to a healthy mouth. Here are some tips for getting and keeping a healthy mouth:

- When it comes to infants, avoid putting them to bed with a bottle. It's also beneficial to try to keep shared utensils away from them, so they don't get additional germs in their mouth.
- At any age of life, it is important to establish a healthy oral hygiene routine. As soon as infants have their first tooth come in, parents can begin keeping it clean. Once they are old enough to brush, parents can create a routine and help them see it through.

- Be sure to brush your teeth at least twice per day, for two minutes each time. While you are at it, brush your tongue as well. You also need to floss at least once per day. This is one that even adults like to cut corners on, but the benefits are well worth the effort.
- Make a twice per year visit to your dentist's office for a check up and cleaning. This will help keep the plaque removed off the teeth, the teeth clean and polished, and will help the dentist discover any issues that may arise.
- See an orthodontist as recommended by your dentist or if you feel you have issues that may warrant a consultation with one. Such issues as bite misalignment, braces, and teeth straightening are best handled by an orthodontist, who is a trained specialist in these areas.
- Always use a mouth guard when playing sports. This simple little device, which can be picked up at a sporting goods store, can save you a great deal of pain and money later!
- Replace your toothbrush regularly, which is every two to three months or as the bristles become frayed.
- Avoid forgetting to floss each day. Leave the floss sitting out on the bathroom counter, or put a little sticky note on the mirror. Make a point to do it each day for a month, by which time it should become a habit.
- Make sure that even though you are brushing twice a day that you are brushing long enough. Aim for two minutes per session. If you opt for an electric toothbrush, they often let you know when it has been two minutes.
- Speak to your doctor about any prescriptions you may be taking that have side effects that harm the teeth. If there are some, maybe you can get them swapped out for something else or ask for suggestions to protect your teeth.
- Avoid smoking or using chewing tobacco, both of which can lead to many oral health problems.
- Keep drinks in check! Sugar drinks should be avoided or kept to a minimum, as well as highly acidic drinks (e.g., citrus sodas and sports drinks, etc.), which can eat away at and erode the tooth enamel.
- Forget using your teeth to open things or chew on items such as pens. Both can be damaging.
- Avoid sharing things like straws, utensils, lip balm, etc. The bacteria and saliva can transmit things that lead to an unhealthy mouth.

STAYING HEALTHY

Having a healthy mouth is important for life, a healthy overall body, and achieving optimal wellness. It is also essential for feeling comfortable and confident, as well as living pain-free.

Keep the above items in your mind, make them a habit, and you will be well on your way to a healthy mouth!



The 5 Ws of **DENTAL IMPLANTS**

Have a missing tooth? Do you feel subconscious when you smile because you don't want anyone to see that you have a missing tooth or possibly more than one missing tooth? The good news is there is a solution, and it's a lot easier than you may realize! The solution to the problem of the missing tooth for many people is found in dental implants.

No matter why you may be missing the tooth, be it from an accident or other reason, there's just no reason to have to live with the embarrassment that may come with missing a tooth. But even beyond the cosmetic reasons for getting dental implants, there are some solid medical ones, too.

Here are the 5 W's of dental implants:

- **Who** dental implants are for includes anyone who may have one or more missing teeth. A good candidate is someone who has healthy gums and a healthy jaw bone.
- **What** dental implants are is an artificial tooth that is implanted right into the jaw bone. Once the healing process completes, this will create a solid bond, with the gum tissue providing further support.
- **Where** you have this procedure done will be related to the referral you receive from your dentist. Typically, a periodontist will perform the procedure, using anesthesia.
- **When** the best time to have a dental implant put in is sooner, rather than later. Even those who feel they are getting by just fine missing the tooth may not realize the bone loss and tissue damage that it could be creating. Leaving it untreated can not only damage other teeth, but may lead to a change in facial appearance.
- **Why** people get it done includes the cosmetic reasons of just wanting to enjoy showing people a great smile again, as well as to avoid the medical problems that can result. Leaving it untreated can lead to bone loss, speech problems and facial structure issues.

Dental implant procedures have become common. They are a great way to address the missing tooth both for the cosmetic and medical benefits. If you have a missing tooth, or more than one missing tooth, speak to your dentist to see if you are a candidate for dental implants. This is one procedure that is sure to put a smile on your face!





Braces Friendly Recipes

SALMON ROASTED IN BUTTER

Makes 4-6 Servings

Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter
- 4 tablespoons minced chervil, parsley or dill
- 1 salmon fillet, 1 1/2 to 2 pounds
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Lemon wedges

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 475 degrees. Place the butter and half the herb in a roasting pan just large enough to fit the salmon and place it in the oven. Heat about 5 minutes, until the butter melts and the herb begins to sizzle.

Step 2: Add the salmon to the pan, skin side up. Roast 4 minutes. Remove from the oven, then peel the skin off. (If the skin does not lift right off, cook 2 minutes longer.) Sprinkle with salt and pepper and turn the fillet over. Sprinkle with salt and pepper again.

Step 3: Roast 3 to 5 minutes more, depending on the thickness of the fillet and the degree of doneness you prefer. Cut into serving portions, spoon a little of the butter over each and garnish with the remaining herb. Serve with lemon wedges.

ASK THE DOCTOR...

What size electric toothbrush head should I get?

Many would choose the largest head, thinking that it would cover more of the surface of your teeth. Actually, a small head is often best to make it easier to clean those hard to reach places. A small brush head can also help to save your gums from damage.

To ensure your toothbrush has undergone rigorous quality control testing for cleaning effectiveness and safety, ask us for a recommendation.



A photograph of a young man and a woman smiling and leaning together. The man is on the left, wearing a maroon shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a brown top and a necklace. They are both looking towards the camera.

What Every Mom Must Know Before

CHOOSING AN ORTHODONTIST

Choosing the right orthodontist can be difficult, but it is important to make sure you take time to learn a bit about what an orthodontist does so that you can make the right decision for your child (and yourself). Finding one that you are comfortable with is also very important, as you will be interacting with this doctor for awhile on your child's most important facial features - their smile!

Asking the right questions will help you make the right choice as a parent. The following list of short tips will help you decide which orthodontist will best serve the needs of your family.

1. Is the Doctor a Specialist?

Orthodontists receive an additional 2-3 years of specialized education, beyond dental school, to learn the proper way to straighten and align teeth. Orthodontists practice orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics exclusively. All orthodontists are dentists, but only 6% of dentists are orthodontists. Look for the seal of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO). Only orthodontic specialists can belong to the AAO.

2. When Should My Child Have an Evaluation?

Children should be evaluated early (age 7) to determine the best time to start treatment. If treatment is prescribed for a later time, the child should be periodically evaluated in a pre-orthodontic guidance program. These patients should have periodic visits to check on tooth eruption and jaw relationships.

Most parents are shocked that their first or second-grader has been referred to the orthodontist. Although the overwhelming majority of patients this age do not require early treatment, the American Association of Orthodontists recommends a screening by the age of 7 in order to rule out

possible problems that can be much harder to correct in later years. If you see one of the following problems, call your orthodontist to schedule a screening exam to see if your child can benefit from early treatment.

3. Is the first visit free of charge?

Most orthodontists offer free examinations for new patients so that you and your family can get the expert advice about treatment needs, treatment options and the timing of treatment before making this important investment.

4. Am I Too Old for Orthodontic Treatment?

Orthodontic treatment is possible at any age, but there is an ideal time when the most conservative techniques will produce the best results. The orthodontic specialist is specifically trained to determine this ideal time. Skeletal (jaw size) discrepancy treatment must be initiated while there is enough growth remaining, otherwise, compromises and compensations will be needed.

5. Are They Highly Successful?

Why is this important? Why choose someone who is busy and who is not bargain-priced? When you discover a practice that is busy, you have discovered a practice built on referrals. Parents tell parents about great orthodontic practices because they earned their trust and they were happy with the results. Successful practices also do not have downward financial pressure on how to care for their patients. They don't cut corners. Both of these factors are very important in choosing a practice that will provide the best care for your son or daughter.

6. How Has Technology Changed Braces?

Orthodontics isn't what it used to be. Computer-designed braces and wires can dramatically increase the precision of tooth movement and shorten treatment time. Tie-free braces systems promote more comfort and more efficient treatment.

Clear braces offer a cosmetically pleasing alternative while Invisalign offers the patient a brace-free option! Invisalign now has a special treatment system just for teens. Orthodontists can even place braces behind your teeth,



providing another aesthetic option for adults and teens.

7. Does the Quoted Fee Include Retainers?

The most important part to achieving a straight smile is keeping it that way. Retainers can be provided in pairs. Should you lose or break one, you have a backup retainer that can be worn until a new retainer can be made.

8. Is There a Charge for Emergency Appointments?

Some discomfort can be anticipated with braces. Adjustments for poking wires and loose appliances are typically provided free of charge. Damaged or broken appliances due to non-compliance with dietary restrictions may result in repair charges, however. Please do your best to avoid breaking your braces. Broken braces can result in delayed treatment and compromised results.

9. What Payment Options are Available?

Orthodontists can offer a number of affordable payment options. Zero-down, no-interest payment plans are available to help those patients who really want braces but cannot afford a large down payment. For your convenience, look for an office that accepts most insurance and will work hard to help you receive the maximum benefit.

10. Does the Office Make My Child Feel Special?

Let's face it, orthodontics is largely an elective procedure with no shortage of providers to deliver what you need. Your orthodontist should strive to make each visit to the office something to smile about!

What Dental Insurance Plans **WON'T TELL YOU...**



Those who have dental insurance plans may feel like they are covered and all set. But not so fast! As it turns out, there may be a lot that you don't know or understand about your dental insurance plan that will leave you in the dark. Your dental insurance plans may not be eager to share this information with you, but knowing it can make a world of difference in planning your treatments.

When it comes down to it, most dental insurance plans do not cover a large portion of the treatment you may be getting. In fact, some are capped out at \$1,000, leaving a sizable portion for the patient to pay, depending on the type of treatment they have. Unlike health insurance, where premiums are higher, dental insurance is typically quite affordable. But those low premiums mean there's not a lot of room for the insurance company to pick up the tab for treatment.

Here are a few things dental insurance plans won't tell you, but you need to know:

- Pre-existing conditions. If you have been putting off dental work, there may be a chance that some consider it a pre-existing condition.
- Cosmetic versus necessary. They may differ from you when it comes to determining what is a cosmetic procedure versus what you feel is necessary.
- You may have surprise costs. If you don't check and just use your insurance, you may end up getting billed for more than you had planned.
- There are limitations. Every insurance company has limitations on what they will pay.
- You have to be your own advocate. It may seem as though some automatically try to deny a claim. But you have to keep on it and be your advocate to get what you feel is yours.

The most important thing you can do when it comes to your dental insurance is to know exactly what it covers before you ever get treatment. This way you go into every treatment knowing there won't be any billing surprises later!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What percent of orthodontic patients are adults?

A. While most people think orthodontic patients are children, it is estimated that about 20% are adults! Did you also know that the majority of these adult patients report no regrets in pursuing orthodontic treatment at an adult age? Obtaining that beautiful smile they have always dreamed of is easier than they think.

Avoiding Costly Mistakes at Your DENTAL VISIT

Nobody wants to spend more at the dentist office than they have to. Yet there are numerous people who walk out of the dentist's office each day who will end up spending a great deal more than they had planned. That's because they went in unprepared and without the information they need to save themselves money!

Most people call a dentist's office and ask if the place takes their insurance. But that's usually the wrong question to ask! Whether or not an office takes your insurance doesn't mean they are actually in your network. What you really want to know is if they are in your network. Some people hear that the place takes the insurance, they go in for the appointment, and a week later they get a bill in the mail that shocks them. It's typically about 40 percent higher than they thought it would be.

Dental offices will usually "take" your insurance and bill for it, but that doesn't mean they are in your network. When your insurance receives the bill and verifies this information you will be left holding the bill. This is one of the most costly mistakes that people make when it comes to going to the dentist.

If you want to avoid this costly mistake, be sure to ask the office if they are in your network, and

even call your insurance company to confirm it. That's the best way to avoid receiving a bill that's much larger than you had thought when you set up the appointment. A couple of quick phone calls to confirm someone is in your network can save you a lot of money!







Tips for Getting Your Child to **BRUSH & FLOSS**

Adults know full well just how important it is to keep their teeth brushed and flossed each day. And even they sometimes have difficulty with making themselves floss on a daily basis. Trying to get kids in the habit of brushing and flossing each day may take a little time, but it is an important habit to establish. The benefits of helping them learn to have good oral hygiene are well documented and just as visibly noticeable!

The Problems

Good dental hygiene habits can certainly be established at an early age. Once children get started and are in the habit of taking care of their teeth, they will be more likely to stick with it throughout the rest of their lives. Good oral care includes not only brushing and flossing, but also includes considering the foods being eaten and seeing the dentist regularly. Sugar, for example, plays a key role in causing dental caries, or tooth decay, so limiting it is a good idea.

When kids don't brush and floss regularly, they are setting themselves up to have a multitude of problems. They will likely end up with cavities, which usually leads to dental treatments, and even making themselves more susceptible to things like gingivitis, which is the beginning of gum disease. Both conditions can lead to a loss of teeth, pain and discomfort and a variety of other problems.

Good Habits

From an early age, children can begin taking on the responsibility of brushing and flossing their teeth. However, a parent will still need to double check their work and likely go over their teeth, even when they are 6 or 7 years old or longer. Children should be brushing their teeth twice per day, ideally once in the morning and once before bed, and flossing once per day as well.

Tips for Getting Your Child to Brush & Floss (continued)

When they brush their teeth, it is recommended that they use a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste, and that they should brush for a period of two minutes. It is important to also teach kids to brush their tongue and to gently brush their gums as well.

The number one goal should be to establish the healthy habit of regularly brushing and flossing. But just how do you go about doing that? There are some things you can do to help get your child more interested in taking part of this daily ritual, including:

- **Make it fun.** You can do this by letting them choose a new toothbrush every time they need a new one (which is every two to three months, or when the bristles are frayed).
- **Use a reward chart.** Kids love to get stickers or checkmarks! You can set up a tooth care reward chart to keep them on track each day. Keep track of each time they do it, and then provide a small reward for doing well.
- **Make it a routine.** If you create a morning and evening routine that includes oral care, kids will be more likely to know that it is going to happen and they will avoid trying to get out of it.
- **Use an electric toothbrush.** Not only do kids like them, and some are quite affordable today, but they will help them learn how long to brush as well.

- **See the results.** Pick up some disclosure tablets from the drugstore or dentist office that will reveal the job they are doing. After brushing, kids chew the tablet, and it shows all the places they missed. It will help them learn to brush better.
- **Make it musical.** Put a CD player near the bathroom with some kids tunes. Each tooth-brushing time, play one song and have them brush through the whole song. You can even dance around some while it plays.

The Foundation

Children should begin seeing a dental professional from an early age in order to keep an eye on their progression. Orthodontists, for example, meet with children starting at age 7, and they are able to help determine if there will be problems later on that they can work on to avoid now. From an early age, they can help address spacing and bite issues, so kids grow up feeling more confident and comfortable.

Getting kids to get in the habit of brushing and flossing each day is beneficial while they are young, as well as setting the foundation for when they are adults. Make brushing and flossing every bit a part of the daily routine and before you know it, they will be reminding you that it's time to brush!



How to Relax **AT THE DENTIST**



If you suffer from anxiety with the mere thought of walking into the dentist's office, you are not alone. There are millions of people who fear going to the dentist or suffer from mild to extreme anxiety about getting into the chair for treatment. But getting dental treatments are a necessary part of living a healthy lifestyle, so we have to find ways to overcome those fears and get the work done that is needed!

Fears of visiting the dentist often come from past experiences or hearing about experiences that others may have had. Try to get to the bottom of why you are so afraid in the first place. Determine if your fears are well-founded or if they don't have much of a leg to stand on. Be honest with yourself here so you can begin to make office visits less stressful.

Once you get to the office you find you have the worst anxiety yet. But there are things you

can do to help yourself relax while in the dentist office, including:

- **Meditate.** Using meditation for even 10 minutes can greatly help to reduce your fears. As you sit in your car in the parking lot or as you wait in the waiting room for your appointment, close your eyes and use that time to meditate. Focus solely on your breathing, in and out. Meditation has a way of clearing the mind and calming us.
- **Positive thinking.** Close your eyes and envision everything going great with your dental visit. The power of positive thinking like this cannot be overlooked.
- **Calming music.** Take your headphones with you, along with some music that you find calming. Listen to it as you sit in the waiting room, and discuss with the dentist if you could use it during treatment, too.

How to Relax at the Dentist (continued)

- **Sedation.** If the other options are not working or do not appeal to you, consider discussing sedation options with the dentist. There are several options you can choose from, including oral sedation, and nitrous oxide, among others.
- **Discuss them.** Take a few minutes to discuss your fears and anxiety with the dentist. Let them know you are afraid of the procedure and see what they suggest. Perhaps you can use a “stop” hand signal if you are feeling uncomfortable at any time.

The best way to overcome fear of the dentist is to consistently attend your appointments and to have a dentist you trust. When you have a dentist you trust, you will feel comfortable with the person and their treatment methods. As you consistently continue going to the dentist you will help to minimize your fears each time.

When it comes down to it, there is a lot more to fear about skipping out on dental treatments than there is to getting the work done once and for all!

IS SEDATION DENTISTRY FOR YOU?

When it comes to what people fear most, some would say it's public speaking. Others would say they feel the same fear and anxiety when it comes to visiting the dentist. In fact, there are a lot of people who would rather suffer through the pain of a dental condition rather than undergo the procedure to have it treated.

There is an answer for those who can't get past the anxiety to visit the dentist for treatment. It's called sedation dentistry! With sedation dentistry, the goal is to help you relax enough that you can actually get the treatment that you need.

There are several types of sedation options available, including:

- **Nitrous oxide sedation** (“Laughing gas”) This one is commonly used when someone wants sedation. It's quick to work and wear off and doesn't even require that you have a designated driver after the procedure.
- **Oral conscious sedation.** Many offices use oral conscious sedation, which involves taking pills that will help to relax you prior to the procedure. (Children are typically given a liquid form of oral conscious sedation.) With this form of sedation you are still awake and able to answer questions.
- **Intravenous sedation.** This type of sedation requires you to have a ride home, as it doesn't wear off right away. With this you will receive the sedation through the veins and will have little to no memory of the procedure taking place.

Sedation dentistry has helped many people to relax enough to get the dental treatment they need. Ask your dentist which sedation options they offer and if you would be a good candidate!



How to Handle **COMMON DENTAL EMERGENCIES**

A dental emergency can be anything from a broken tooth to a sudden pain. If it's something that can't wait until Monday to schedule appointment then there's a good chance it's an emergency. Some are more common than others, but all of them can leave you desperate for advice and relief.

Here are some of the more common dental emergencies and what to do about them:

- **Broken or cracked tooth.** Save the tooth or pieces that have broken off. Gently rinse the mouth out. Apply gauze if there is any bleeding. A cold compress can be used on the outside of the mouth to help keep it from swelling and help with pain relief.
- **Knocked out.** If a tooth has been completely knocked out, your best chance of saving it is for you to be in the dentist chair within an hour. Rinse the tooth off, and if you can't gently put it back into the socket then put it in a glass of milk, store-bought Save-a-Tooth, or salted water.
- **Dislodged tooth.** This happens to children at times when they are playing. Give them

some pain reliever and take them to the dentist as soon as possible.

- **Severe toothache.** Try rinsing your mouth with warm water and gently flossing to remove any irritants. A cold compress can be used to help reduce swelling as can taking pain reliever.
- **Lost crown or filling.** Both of these situations will require a trip to the dentist for treatment. In the case of a lost filling you can use dental cement from the store to put in there, or sugar free gum. If you lose a crown try putting it back on until you see the dentist.
- **Abscess.** If you have an abscess it can become serious because it is a sign of infection. Take pain reliever to reduce the pain and see the dentist as soon as possible.

There is no absolute way to help minimize the risks of dental emergencies but one thing you can do is not miss routine dental office visits where potential problems can be identified and treated before they become an emergency.





What Every Parent Needs to Know About **THUMBSUCKING AND PACIFIER USE**

If there is one common complaint among parents, it is that of thumbsucking or pacifier use. Problem is, thumbsucking and pacifier use among babies and toddlers is largely misunderstood by parents. Most parents fall in the camp of not knowing what is normal behavior and what's gone too far, and when it may be time for a professional evaluation. The good news is that the more you know about this issue, the more comfortable and prepared you will be to deal with it!

Simply Misunderstood

Most parents get worried when they see their baby or toddler sucking their thumb or using a pacifier. This is because they assume the worst and don't realize that it's perfectly normal behavior. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics reports that nearly 100 percent of normal babies will engage in nonnutritive sucking, which is sucking on a finger, thumb, pacifier, or object such as a blanket.

Infants begin nonnutritive sucking because they find it to be a calming and soothing thing to do. It has even been cited by experts as a way to help reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. Since nearly all babies are born with the need to suck, they find that when they do it helps them to feel comforted. Many babies even start sucking their thumb while they are still in the womb. Parents should not be alarmed when infants are sucking their thumb, because at this point it is rarely ever an issue of concern, and just something that comes naturally to the baby.

Growing Beyond

When it comes to pacifier use versus thumbsucking, the experts tend to agree that ditching the habit is easier when there is a pacifier involved. When the child has been attached to the pacifier and the parent is ready to pull the plug they can simply get rid of the pacifier and preoccupy the child each time they look for it. In the same respect, we can't just get rid of the thumb or finger, so it makes it a little more challenging to break the habit when the time comes.

Some children will grow out of or stop thumbsucking and pacifier use between the ages of two and four. Yet the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) reports that around 20 percent of children between 36 to 48 months are still thumbsucking or using a pacifier. They recommend that if a child hasn't started the process of weaning from it at age three then it is time for a dental evaluation for a professional opinion. Some children are still thumbsucking when they enter school. Some believe this may be a helpful deterrent, because the peer pressure will get the child to stop. But others may feel that it gives students a reason to bully and exclude the child.

When to be Concerned

While thumbsucking and pacifier use is normal for babies and younger toddlers, there can still be a higher risk of having some problems associated with it. If children use a pacifier often, parents may notice that it interferes with their

What Every Parent Needs to Know About Thumbsucking and Pacifier Use (continued)

speaking. They may try to speak with it in their mouth, preventing them from being understood. This can be a concern when it comes to their verbal skill development and parents may want to start looking for ways to begin limiting their pacifier use to naps and bedtime. It's also important to note that when using a pacifier it should not be coated in anything, such as sweets and it should be cleaned regularly. If the pacifier looks like it is worn or has holes or tears then it is time to replace it or do away with it altogether if the child is ready.

Beyond the verbal issues that may become a concern for parents, there can be dental issues with prolonged use of pacifiers or thumbsucking. AAPD reports that the prolonged use could lead to an open bite, because the thumb or pacifier tends to push the top teeth up toward the lip or forces them to not come in properly. If there has been frequent use for a long period of time it may affect the bite, as well as the jaw growth, which support the teeth.

Dental Exams

The American Dental Association recommends that children see a dentist for the first time within six months of their first tooth erupting, or at 12 months of age, whichever comes first. If parents follow this guideline they will have the added benefit of getting a professional opinion when it comes to the thumbsucking and pacifier use. The dentist will be able to monitor the development and notify parents if they see the nonnutritive sucking becoming a dental issue.

For those parents who may have already missed the one-year mark to take their child to the dentist, it's never too late. Booking an appointment is especially a good idea for those children who may have visible dental issues, complain of any kind of tooth or gum discomfort, or who are still thumbsucking or using a pacifier by the age of three. The dentist can identify development issues early on, refer you to a specialist, and long-term problems can be avoided.



Looking Ahead

Thumbsucking and pacifier use is without a doubt one of the major concerns that parents of babies and toddlers have. If you have a child in this age range that uses one the important thing to know is that you are not alone, and it's not likely to last forever. It's a natural process that babies do in order to comfort and soothe themselves, and having effective self-calming abilities is actually a great thing.

That being said, it can pose problems in some children so it can't be ignored for an extended

period of time. If you have concerns about it or there is prolonged use, then it may be time to seek an evaluation from a dentist. This will help put your mind at ease and get an early handle on any dental issues that may be resulting from the prolonged use. Keeping tabs on the issue and stepping in if there are concerns may provide the happy medium that protects your child's teeth, while allowing them to self-soothe using their preferred method.

8 TIPS FOR BREAKING A THUMBSUCKING OR PACIFIER HABIT

1. Depending on your child, you may want to go cold turkey. Just pull the pacifier and throw them all out without the child seeing you do this. Each time they look for it, distract them. After about two days they will no longer be looking for it and will have moved on.
2. Offer your child a new comfort object, such as letting them pick out a new stuffed animal in exchange for no longer using a pacifier or sucking their thumb.
3. Avoid punishment to get the desired behavior, because it's something that has been allowed up until this point and you will have more success breaking the habit by using positive reinforcement.
4. Create a reward system with your child. For each day or half day they go without using a pacifier or sucking their thumb, give them a sticker. Once they go so many days or a week, let them pick out a small prize or reward.
5. If you have a toddler, try talking to them about why it's a good idea to now break the habit. Explain how it may affect their teeth if they continue. This approach may work with some kids who are old enough to understand.
6. Help your child find a new way to self soothe, which is usually why they are using a pacifier or thumbsucking in the first place. This may be having a special blanket, doing meditation, thinking about their favorite place, taking a warm bath, reading a book, using a rocking chair and practicing deep breathing.
7. If your child has prolonged use and nothing seems to be working to break the habit, take them to the dentist for a professional evaluation. The dentist can give you some recommendations, including dental appliances that can be used if there are concerns.
8. Have patience when trying to help your child break the habit. After all, they are just toddlers, so it's a good idea to consistently work toward reaching the goal and give them positive reinforcement along the way.



Cosmetic Dentistry **AT ANY AGE!**



If you look in the mirror and no longer love the smile you are giving back, it may be time to do something about it. Many people make the mistake in thinking that there comes a day when they just have to give in accept that their teeth are not going to look as good as they want them to. Not true!

Cosmetic dentistry has come a long way over the years and today there are treatments for just about anything you'd like to take care of. Want whiter teeth? No problem! Want to replace the metal fillings for ones that are white and blend in with your teeth? You can do that too! There are so many minor to major treatments that can be done in order to give you the smile you are confident and comfortable having.

Many people who didn't get braces as children assume that it's too late and there's nothing they can do to straighten their teeth. This is probably one of the most misunderstood areas of cosmetic dentistry. The fact is, you are never too old to straighten your teeth and have the smile you want.

In fact, over one million adults per year today are getting braces. This represents major growth over the years with the introduction of treatments like Invisalign, which is a braces treatment system that is virtually transparent. The system allows people to straighten their teeth in a more discreet way, so they are not flashing a metal smile during the months of treatment. Invisalign offers a precise treatment,

is virtually invisible, and can be removed for up to an hour or two per day to give the mouth a rest or eat foods that would otherwise be forbidden with traditional braces.

A confident smile is something we all need in life. Don't let yours bring you down. Even if you just want to get rid of the discoloration that has happened over the years, there is always something that can be done! And if you are interested in learning more about Invisalign, speak with an orthodontist today!

DID YOU KNOW...

that with Invisalign braces you can remove them to for brushing and flossing your teeth, as well as when you eat? It's true! Invisalign trays are virtually invisible, giving adults the ability to comfortably and discretely straighten their teeth and achieve the smile they have always dreamed of!

QUICK TIPS



BAD BREATH BEGONE!

Bad breath can be a result of something you ate, improper oral hygiene, or medical problems and illnesses. It can also be a result of gum disease. The best way to get rid of bad breath is to maintain oral hygiene, address any oral issues that you may need treatment for, and to use a tongue scraper, which can remove bacteria. Additionally, you can chew sugar-free gum, drink water, and suck on sugarless candy, all of which will stimulate saliva and help to wash away the offending bacteria and particles.



COULD YOUR MEDICATIONS BE CAUSING DRY MOUTH?

There are over 400 prescription medications that can lead to dry mouth. Saliva helps us digest food, protects teeth from decay, helps prevent infection, and makes it possible for us to chew and swallow. Beyond medications there are other problems that can lead to ongoing dry mouth, too, including some diseases, radiation or chemotherapy, and nerve damage. To help combat dry mouth, drink water often, avoid caffeine, chew sugarless gum, avoid tobacco products, and use a humidifier at night when you sleep.



IS CHILDHOOD OBESITY CONTRIBUTING TO CAVITIES?

Children ages 7-15 years old were studied to see if those who were obese were more likely to have dental problems or cavities. The researchers found that obese children have a higher risk for having dental erosion, but not have for having cavities. The erosion, which is tooth wear, is often linked to soft drinks, even if they are sugar-free. Your child's best bet is to skip the soft drinks all together to help protect their teeth from erosion.



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