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URGENT

Early evaluation 'intercepts,' prevents later orthodontic problems

Marc Chase Feb 3, 2019 0

"Interceptive" may take your mind to sports, but in my professional league, interceptive refers to a type of orthodontics where I diagnose and treat malocclusions (misaligned teeth) as soon as they are discovered.

Malocclusions have an impact on the way we chew, clean our teeth, the way we feel about our smile and are a sign of unfavorable growth patterns.

With interceptive orthodontics, we start early to create room for crowded or erupting teeth and address proper oral rest posture. We recommend that every child should be evaluated by age 4 or sooner if problems with feeding, breathing or sleeping are noticed. I want to listen to and answer the concerns that keep you up at night about your child's health.

Orthodontics doesn't need to wait until all the permanent teeth have erupted. The sooner a problem can be recognized and addressed, the better the long term outcome.

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There are a number of reasons for an early orthodontic evaluation. Common concerns include the patient's ability to brush, which may be difficult and may lead to tooth decay. It may also lead to protruding teeth, which are at greater risk for chipping and often considered unaesthetic; openbite (when upper and lower teeth don't come together when the mouth is closed), which may affect eating and speech articulations; and crossbites, which may affect jaw growth.

At In Harmony Orthodontics, we also advise early or interceptive treatment in order to guide the patient’s growth potential in a more favorable direction.

My practice is brd on correcting the bad bite by addressing the underlying cause in addition to straightening the smile. Interceptive orthodontics aims to eliminate the need for any permanent teeth to be extracted because of crowding, nasal breathing, detrimental habit elimination and to establish proper rest oral posture.

Signs of improper rest oral posture include:

crusty/dry lips
lips apart at rest
lip strain when lips are together
rolled out lip
prominent “cupid’s bow” appearance of the upper lip
top and/or bottom jaw back/recessed from ideal position

Poor or improper rest oral posture may lead to mouth breathing, which will be detrimental to one’s oral and overall health.

Bre Grzch, Lac, LMT, of NWI Acupuncture and Green Pediatrics explains, “It is important to minimize factors that contribute to mouth breathing (allergies, improperly formed palates) to insure proper development, function and overall health. Classical theory notes that breathing through the mouth can lead to poor facial muscle function, improper facial bone development, poor dental health, decreased respiratory function and dysregulation of the digestive system.”

Working together with various therapeutic modalities to establish nasal breathing sets the patient up for proper muscle and bone development of the face and palate.

Stacy Lashenik RDH, of NWI OMT, became an orofacial myofunctional therapist because she had problems with her own teeth wearing down, clenching, grinding and facial pain.

“My goal is to be part of the movement toward early intervention so kids today can avoid some of the lifelong problems that can be associated with myofunctional disorders," she said.

Stacy Lashenik, RDH, and Dr. Susan Royer, DDS, recently shared an example of working together on an early intervention case in Dr. Royer's office.

“Recently a 5-year-old boy came in for his first dental exam, and we discovered that he was severely tongue tied. After talking with his family, we learned that he was a picky eater, could not gain weight, teeth grinder and had difficulty sleeping. Following myofunctional therapy and tongue-tie release, his symptoms ceased.

"This patient's overall health was affected dramatically, and he has a significantly reduced likelihood of requiring full orthodontic treatment — which is the goal.

"Depending on other factors, he may need future orthodontic treatment to help widen the jaws to accommodate for proper rest oral posture, but he is eating, sleeping and thriving now.”

At In Harmony Orthodontics, we know that teeth grinding, mouth breathing and being a picky eater may be common in today's children, but that does not mean it's normal.

Early screening and evaluation is essential for good oral health. Collaborating with other healthcare professionals is part of the overall treatment plan.

Speech language pathologist Tracy Biggs, M.A., CCC-SLP, of the Missing Link Speech Therapy said, “Someone who is recommended for complete palatal expansion by their orthodontist may experience poor articulation and some difficulty swallowing. As an SLP specializing in orofacial myofunctional therapy, my job is to set the foundation of oral skills for success prior to palatal expansion, tweak skills during the process and review to create harmony between the lips and tongue with the palate, jaw and teeth.”

The In Harmony Orthodontics philosophy is to treat the whole child and deliver the individual solution. My goal is for kids to have optimum chewing, breathing and speaking capacities, along with straighter teeth through holistic, integrative and interceptive orthodontic services.

We do more than provide braces. We collaborate with your child's family dentist, pediatrician, speech pathologist and other health-care professionals to understand all of the dynamics impacting your child's health. Together we can design the very best plan to straighten your child's smile and improve their overall path to success and good health.

To learn more about interceptive orthodontics, visit **www.inharmonyorthodontics.com**.

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By Marc Chase

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