

Inspired by the book "understanding orthodontics" Harold T. Pery, DDS, PhD and David P. Forbes, DDS, PhD published in Quintessence Books

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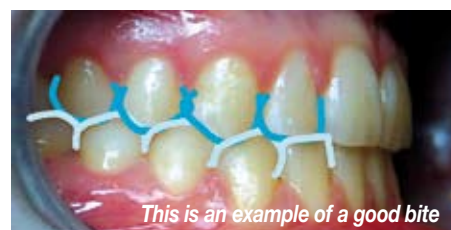
In this article you will find out the answers to the following questions :

What is orthodontics?, What is a bad bite, what can I expect from an orthodontics treatment, and an example of a treatment in a growing child.

Remember, the information in this article is general. You are a unique individual. The orthodontist advice is the best advice you can get.

What's so bad about a bad bite?

Imagine two saw blades that come together in a perfect match like pieces of a puzzle. In an ideal bite, the front teeth overlap slightly, and the edges of your lower teeth should touch the inner surfaces of the upper teeth. This is how your upper and lower teeth should fit together when you close your mouth. If your teeth don't fit together like this, you have a bad bite (or malocclusion).



Having a bad bite affects more than just the way you look. It cause unnecessary wear to your teeth, it may make it difficult for you to speak, swallow, and chew. A bad bite make it harder to clean your teeth and mouth thoroughly, which could cause cavities, gum disease, and bad breath.

WHAT IS ORTHODONTICS?

How the bite develops?

The bones in your face go through many changes as you grow. Even though teeth may look and feel like bones, they don't behave in the same way. Bones continue to develop for as long as you are growing, but crowns are full size even before they grow out of the gums, or erupt, into the mouth.

The front teeth and molars (shown. in blue) are the first permanent teeth to erupt. They leave space between them for the remaining permanent teeth.

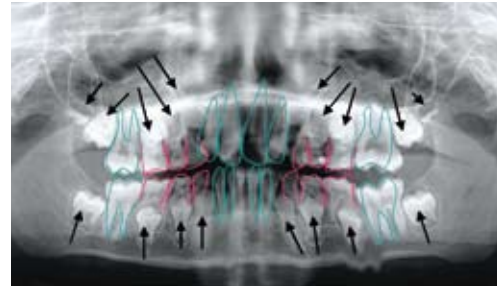


BEFORE



If the teeth don't fit into the space exactly, a bad bite may result. From the time the permanent teeth begin to develop in the jaw until they replace the baby teeth, many different forces work together to form the bite. These include the growing jaw bones, and all the different muscles used to cry, suck, swallow breathe, and speak.

Remember, each bad bite is different. Your problem may not fit into any single group.



On this panoramic X-ray, you still can check the baby teeth in pink, and the permanent teeth in blue. The black arrows show you the unerupted teeth.

What is orthodontics?

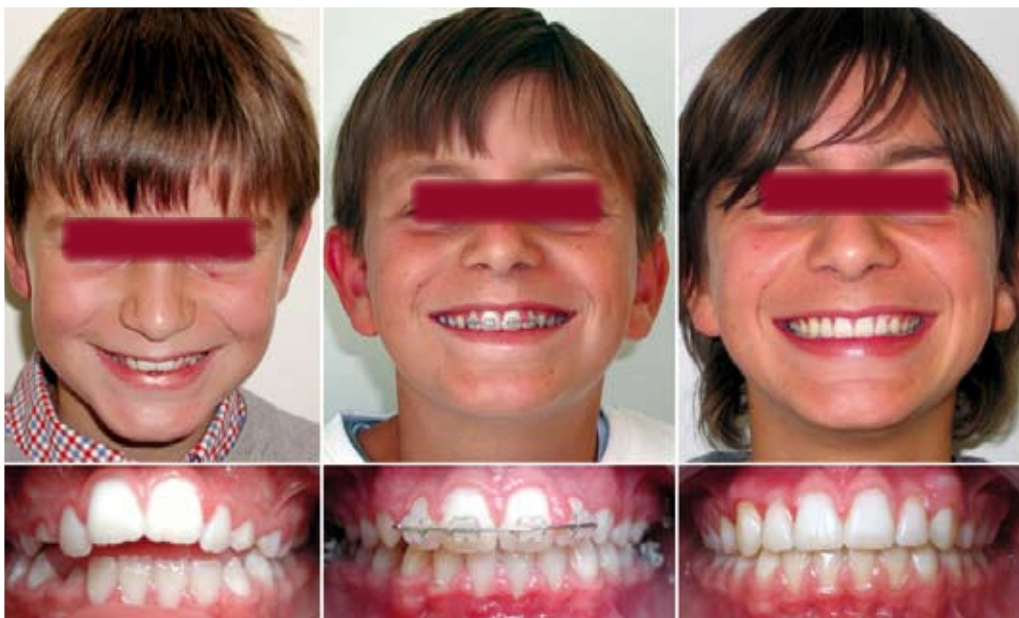
Orthodontics is a special field of dentistry. It involves the diagnosis, the prevention and the correction of teeth, bite and jaw irregularities. Its aim is to produce a healthy bite and a beautiful smile, creating greater resistance to disease and improving personal appearance. This contributes to mental and physical well-being.

Today, with the significant technological advances in the field of orthodontics, treatment can progress more easily and comfortably for patients and in less time than in the past.

“The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that each child be evaluated by age seven”

Example of treatment

This young boy had an openbite with a retrognathic mandible and a narrow upper jaw. These problems were associated with a bad position of the tongue at rest and in function and to a mouth breathing habit. He had a first treatment (called interception treatment) at age 9 during 10 months. The goal was to widen the upper jaw and correct the open bite. In the same time, he had functional myotherapia to restore a good function. I saw him again when he had all of the permanent teeth in mouth at age 13 to detail the occlusion and performed an aesthetics smile.



1- before

2- at the end of interception treatment

3- after