

Does Your Child Need Braces?

**DAMON & DAMON
ORTHODONTICS**

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MOST PARENTS WANT TO KNOW IF THEIR CHILDREN are going to need orthodontic treatment. It is helpful to know the answer in advance of actually needing treatment. Orthodontic treatment continues to be an investment in your child's long-term dental health. It is important to make sure your child has enough room to accommodate his or her permanent teeth.

The dental specialty of orthodontics includes monitoring a child's skeletal growth and tooth development which informs parents about whether or not their child will need braces. The orthodontist can: 1) explain when is the best time to treat, 2) explain why treatment is needed, 3) explain what type of treatment is needed, and 4) give an estimate of how long treatment may last.

The screening exam may include a panorex x-ray which provides valuable information about tooth development. This x-ray is a useful tool in identifying abnormalities, such as, missing teeth or extra teeth. It is sometimes necessary to have baby teeth extracted on the early side to help accommodate the eruption of permanent teeth.

Some children have skeletal discrepancies, such as, one jaw may be longer or shorter than the opposing jaw, or, one jaw may be narrower than the opposing jaw. These discrepancies may need to be treated at an earlier age. Early treatment is often referred to as a Phase I treatment. Patients who need to start early

may also need a second phase of treatment when most of their permanent teeth have erupted.

Orthodontists work to help the patient reach his or her full growth potential. They can help promote favorable jaw growth and tooth development. Orthodontists try to avoid invasive procedures like jaw surgery by intercepting unfavorable jaw development and growth with orthodontic treatment.

Every patient is unique so orthodontic treatment will vary according to what each patient needs and how each patient responds to treatment. It is very important that the patient is seen at regular intervals to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments.

Although some orthodontic appliances are removable, braces allow the orthodontist the most control over the treatment result, especially for growing patients. A new system that is used worldwide was developed by Spokane orthodontist, Dr. Dwight Damon. The system, known as the Damon System, has been clinically proven to reduce treatment time. The Damon System was designed to reduce the amount of force or friction needed to align teeth, which not only reduces risk but also makes the process more comfortable.

At present most orthodontists in the greater Spokane area offer complimentary exams. Many offices also offer flexible payment options. Although longer



Dr. Damon with a patient.

appointments may need to be scheduled during school hours, most offices offer before and after school appointments.

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends an orthodontic screening exam at age seven. However, your family dentist may recommend that your child be seen by an orthodontist before age seven.