



Paedodontic Society of South Africa

Special Group of SADA



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Let me ask you Doc?

Children's Orthodontics

by Dr. Ana-Paula De Freitas



Concerns of Parents and their growing children:

Signs or habits that may indicate the need for an early orthodontic examination: -

- Teeth that meet abnormally or not at all
- Jaws and teeth that are out of proportion to the rest of the face
- Crowding, misplaced teeth, missing teeth
- Mouth breathing
- Thumb sucking
- Difficulty chewing and biting
- Jaws that shift or make sounds
- Biting the cheek or roof of the mouth
- Early or late loss of teeth

Age for screening – 7 yrs

The American Association of Orthodontics recommends orthodontic screening no later than the age of seven. This enables the dentist to detect and evaluate problems (if any), advise if treatment will be necessary and a referral to an orthodontist. The best time for the patient to be treated can also be decided upon, growth related problems can also be identified at this time.

A child's growth and orthodontic treatment can complement each other.

- A common problem is when the upper front teeth protrude (stick out in front) of the lower teeth. This may be because the incorrect inclination of these teeth. This may then be easily corrected by orthodontic therapy.

Let me ask you Doc?

- The lower jaw being shorter than the upper jaw:
 - Orthodontic appliances can be used to help the growth of the lower jaw
 - Abnormal swallowing may be eliminated
 - Corrective surgery can be prevented at a later stage when there is slow jaw growth or none at all
 - These appliances influence the jaw muscle to work in a way that improve forward development of the lower jaw.
Some fixed some removable. You, your dentist and orthodontist can discuss which appliance is best for your child.

Can my child play sport while wearing braces?

Yes wearing a protective mouth guard is advised while playing sport. Your dentist or orthodontist can make a specific mouth guard. Not only does it protect the teeth but also acts as a shock absorber.