

# Children's HEALTH

## Common Questions Parents Have About Orthodontic Treatment

(NAPSA)—Today, more than four million children in the United States and Canada are receiving treatment from orthodontists. And, while parents know that orthodontic treatment results in a healthy, beautiful smile, many don't realize the important long-term health benefits.

"Parents have a lot of good questions about orthodontic treatment, the benefits of treatment and when a child should see an orthodontist," says Dr. Terry R. Pracht, president of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO). "Our recommendation is that children get a check-up with an orthodontic specialist no later than age seven. If there's a problem, we can identify it and recommend the appropriate treatment at the appropriate time."

As part of its commitment to education, the AAO provides parents with this list of answers to commonly asked questions about orthodontic care.

### Seven Common Questions Parents Have About Orthodontic Treatment

**Q:** Why is orthodontic treatment important?

**A:** Straight teeth and properly aligned jaws contribute to good dental health, as well as overall physical health. Orthodontic treatment can boost a person's self-image as teeth, lips and jaws move into position and improve appearance.

**Q:** How do parents know if their child needs orthodontic treatment?

**A:** The best way is to visit an orthodontic specialist. The AAO recommends that all children get a check-up with an orthodontic



**All children should get a check-up with an orthodontic specialist no later than age 7.**

specialist no later than age 7.

**Q:** What if my child still has baby teeth at age 7? Should they still see an orthodontist?

**A:** Yes. By age 7, enough permanent teeth have arrived for orthodontists to evaluate how the teeth and jaws meet, and to identify current or developing problems. If a problem is detected, the orthodontist and parents can discuss when treatment may be necessary.

**Q:** How does a child's growth affect orthodontic treatment?

**A:** Treatment and growth often complement each other. In some cases, the orthodontist takes advantage of a child's growth to guide jaws and teeth into their ideal positions.

**Q:** How often do you visit your orthodontist while wearing braces?

**A:** Typically a child will see the

orthodontist every 4-12 weeks throughout the course of treatment.

**Q:** If you currently don't have an orthodontist, what is the best way to find someone to treat orthodontic problems?

**A:** To find an orthodontist near you, ask for a referral from your family dentist, your pediatrician or your child's school nurse. Or you can visit [www.braces.org](http://www.braces.org) and click on the "Orthodontist Locator" service. It is important to choose an orthodontist who is a member of the AAO. AAO membership is your assurance that the doctor has completed the required training and education to properly treat and diagnose orthodontic problems. Only orthodontists may be members of the AAO.

**Q:** What is the average cost of orthodontic treatment?

**A:** Costs will vary, depending on the treatment needed. Most orthodontists offer convenient payment plans, making treatment more affordable than ever. Most orthodontists will work with you to find a plan that fits your family budget. In addition, many patients have dental insurance that includes orthodontic benefits. Check with your employer's human resources department to learn about your coverage.

Parents interested in additional information on orthodontic treatment and the many benefits of a healthy, beautiful smile may obtain a free video, "A Smile That's Good for Life," available only by calling the AAO's toll-free information line 1-800-STRAIGHT (1-800-787-2444). Further information can be found at [www.braces.org](http://www.braces.org) in the "About Orthodontics" section.