

Pointers For Parents

Today's Braces Are Not Your Mother's Braces

(NAPSA)—Braces—“cool” or even “fun”? According to a new nationwide survey of mothers they are. The survey finds that attitudes regarding orthodontic treatment have changed dramatically over the years, giving the four million children being treated by orthodontists in the U.S. and Canada something to smile about.

The survey, conducted on behalf of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), finds 86 percent of mothers reporting that braces are cooler today than when they were a child. Eighty-one percent even reported their child's experience of having braces as either positive or extremely positive.

The difference? New technologies, advanced computer software, color and style options, and even popular celebrities sporting stylish braces are making orthodontic treatment fashionable and cool for today's youth.

“Braces have really changed since I was a child,” said Marie Neri, whose three children are all wearing braces. “Back then braces were bulky and uncomfortable, but my kids' braces are sleek and lightweight. And my kids have adjusted to them very well.”

Different color options and the ability to change colors, for example, provide ways to alter appearances for young patients. That enthusiasm helps them to feel

good about their braces and may contribute to the success of their treatment.

The survey also revealed 92 percent of mothers weren't aware that a child's first orthodontic visit to an orthodontist should occur no later than age 7.

“The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children have an evaluation by an orthodontic specialist no later than age 7,” said James E. Gjerset, president of the AAO.


“Orthodontists are trained to detect problems with jaw growth or teeth—even when baby teeth are present. If a check-up reveals a problem, an early visit allows the orthodontist to recommend the most appropriate treatment at the most appropriate time,” said Dr. Gjerset.

Orthodontic specialists have successfully completed three to five years of dental school and a minimum of two to three years of advanced specialty training at an accredited orthodontic residency program.

“I was 27 years old when I got braces, followed by oral surgery that helped to expand my palate,” said Neri. “My children were seen by the orthodontist early and started treatment when the orthodontist felt he could most effectively guide the growth of their teeth and bones. Our goal is for my children to avoid the surgery I had to have.”

And while the perceptions sur-

Five quick tips for keeping your child's smile healthy, beautiful, and even “cool.”

1. Brush teeth at least twice a day and floss teeth daily.
2. Parents should supervise brushing and flossing until the child reaches an age they can properly do it on their own, generally around age 6 or 7.
3. Visit the dentist at least every six months. According to the American Dental Association, the first visit should be no later than a child's first birthday.
4. Schedule your child's first orthodontic evaluation with an orthodontist specialist no later than age 7.
5. For active children and children involved in sporting activities, prevent dental injuries by wearing a mouth guard consistently. 

rounding braces have changed, the end result of orthodontic treatment hasn't.

“Orthodontic treatment has changed with technology over the years, but the goal of every orthodontist is to provide their patients with a healthy, good functioning bite and a beautiful smile that lasts a lifetime,” said Dr. David Musich, an orthodontist and member of the AAO.

For more information on orthodontics or to find an orthodontist near you, call 1-800-STRAIGHT (787-2444) or visit www.braces.org.