

Melvin H. Pearson, DDS
*Orthodontic Specialist
for Children, Teens and Adults*



Is Early Treatment Worthwhile?

1. *What Is Early Treatment?*

Early treatment means putting braces, or removable devices of some form, on a child's teeth when he or she still has 10-12 baby teeth (typically age 7 or 8). Whenever this is done, inevitably, a second round of braces will be necessary when all the permanent teeth grow in. Even when the orthodontist fully explains this 2-phase process in advance, frequently, parents are surprised when they are told that a second phase of orthodontic treatment is necessary, typically around age 11 or 12.

2. *The American Association of Orthodontists Recommendation:*

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children should have an orthodontic evaluation by age 7. An experienced orthodontist can clearly see by age seven whether developmental issues can turn into problems. Early detection of common orthodontic problems such as crowding, premature loss of baby teeth, cross bites, or many other unfavorable developmental issues can lead to the implementation of the most appropriate treatment, that can result in a shorter course of therapy. The final result will be more stable, and in most cases the need for permanent tooth extractions can be eliminated.

Frequently, no early intervention will be necessary, except careful monitoring of your child's dental development. This will give you peace of mind when it is not clear to you whether an issue you see is really a problem or just a stage of development that doesn't require intervention.

3. *Is There Such A Thing As Preventive Orthodontics?*

Most parents mean to ask, "Can anything be done to prevent the need for orthodontics, or lessen the extent of treatment required?" Anytime braces or appliances are applied immediately means that no prevention is being done, rather, treatment is being started. Many times this treatment is too early, or not beneficial or cost-effective.

Many published articles in the orthodontic literature and Dr. Pearson's 25+ years experience have proven that habits such as mouth-breathing, finger-sucking, and tongue-thrusting can affect the developing bite and occlusion. The sooner these issues can be taken care of, helps ensure a successful orthodontic result at a later date.

Preventive orthodontics is sometimes as simple as chewing with your mouth closed. Did you know that mouth-breathing can contribute to a malocclusion (a misalignment of teeth and/or incorrect relation between the teeth of the two dental arches)? If you find yourself constantly reminding your child to chew with his/her mouth closed, it may be time for an orthodontic examination.

4. *How Does My Child Benefit From Early Treatment?*

The simple answer is that any early orthodontic care will most likely achieve some benefit.

The questions that **should** be asked are:

“Will the care eliminate some portion of treatment later?”

“Will early treatment help to minimize or make later treatment easier?”

“Will early care make later treatment more effective or make later treatment last longer?”

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that a child’s first orthodontic visit be no later than age 7. There are many orthodontic practices that treat malocclusions both early and late. Even though the patient is receiving benefits at both times, the malocclusion may be something that is able to be effectively resolved in one treatment phase, rather than two. The benefits to the patient include a lower cost of treatment, as well as less time in braces, less time traveling to the orthodontists’ office for visits, and less time away from school.

Dr. Pearson has found that only 10 percent of our patients need early orthodontic treatment.

The vast majority of our early patient visits result in observation only, or periodic habit checks – all at no cost to you.

Many patients benefit from an early visit to an orthodontist, even if they don’t need braces. Just in the last year, some of our early examination patients - while not needing orthodontic care at the initial visit - were found to have **extra or missing teeth, non-malignant tumors, or significant muscle habits** that were contributing to a developing malocclusion.

Early treatment plans may involve moving only a single tooth, or perhaps shaping an entire mouth. Many procedures are available that can significantly improve the success rate and outcome of later-phase orthodontics.

As an incentive to accept necessary early treatment in our practice, our policy is to apply monies paid to us for early care toward the final fee for the treatment at a later date. That way you will not be paying twice.

5. *Why Didn’t My Dentist Mention That?*

To seek treatment from an orthodontic specialist, you do not need to be referred by your general dentist. The fact of the matter is that the art and science of orthodontics involves years of specialized orthodontic training. An orthodontic specialist makes many of their decisions regarding appropriate care, based on expertise they have acquired after having reviewed treatment on hundreds, if not thousands, of orthodontic patients.

On the other hand, most family dentists are very busy taking care of teeth and gum issues that affect the health of the mouth. While your dentist is busy caring for your family’s dental health, let Dr. Pearson shape that beautiful smile. During a complimentary initial orthodontic evaluation, we will assess the need for orthodontics for your family.

If you are waiting for your dentist to refer you to the orthodontist, you may be waiting too long. Many times a simple procedure done at a young age can save months, or even years, of treatment time at a later age.

If you’re wondering, **“Why hasn’t that tooth come in?”** or **“Will that space close?”**, perhaps you should see us.

“What do you mean my child needs braces... I thought her teeth were beautiful?” Parents sometimes find out too late that orthodontic problems are present. Impactions and bite problems are issues that may not be obvious to the naked eye. Diagnostic tools, such as panoramic x-rays, allow your orthodontist to foresee potential problems now, before your child’s teeth are visible. This also allows appropriate preventive measures to be implemented to correct the problem quickly and as cost-effectively as possible. **“But, don’t you need to wait**

for all the teeth to come in?” Early orthodontic evaluation, and appropriately-timed observation visits, will eliminate the questions and surprises that can surface when children don’t see an orthodontist until they are older. **Remember, the American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children receive an orthodontic evaluation by age 7.**

6. I’m So Confused. Whose Opinion Should I Trust?

Start treatment now. Wait awhile. Expand. Take out teeth. Even the types of braces. All of these are issues that arise during an initial screening exam. After visiting other orthodontists, patients are many times confused about the best time to start, the duration of treatment, and even the types of appliances to be used.

Dr. Pearson has rendered first, second, and sometimes, third opinions for over 25+ years, with all types of treatment, braces and philosophies.

Dr. Pearson, and his staff of professionals treat every patient as if they were a member of their own family. **Rest assured, we will only make decisions leading to the correct treatment that is as quick, simple, comfortable, and cost-effective as possible.**

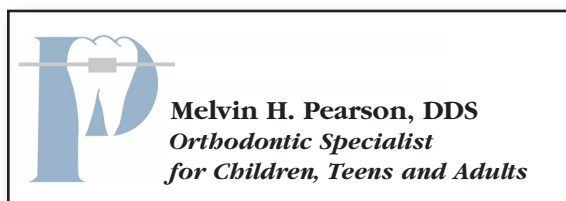
During an initial interview and consultation, we will spend as much time as necessary, evaluating, planning, and discussing your options based on our experience and your unique orthodontic needs.

Remember, there are many, many details that go into selecting an orthodontic office. Look closely at these details. Ask yourself:

- **Who addresses the details for you both professionally and in support service?**
- **What is the atmosphere you sense when visiting the office?**
- **Were you treated the way you would choose to be treated?**
- **Did you walk away understanding the process?**

We are very confident about what you will discover, and we encourage you to find out for yourself.

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