

SETTING THE FOUNDATION:



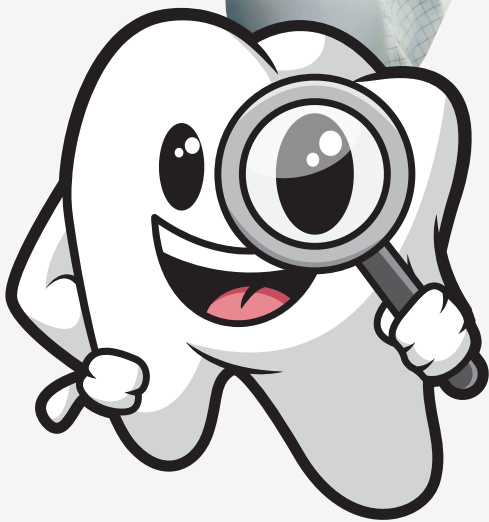
# Why Age 7 is the Perfect Time for Interceptive Orthodontics



As a parent, you want nothing but the best for your child, especially when it comes to their health and well-being. A beautiful, confident smile is an integral part of that, and it all starts with proper dental care.

You can set the foundation for your child's future smile even before their permanent teeth come in. Interceptive orthodontic treatment is an early intervention approach designed to address potential dental issues while your child is still growing.

By catching and correcting problems early, you can ensure that your child's teeth develop in the healthiest way possible, giving them a smile that will last a lifetime!



## What is an Interceptive Orthodontic Treatment?

Interceptive orthodontic treatment, often called early orthodontics, addresses children's orthodontic issues. Think of it as giving your child's smile a head start.


Instead of waiting for issues to arise after their permanent teeth have emerged, this proactive approach steps in early—during childhood—to evaluate, diagnose, and manage any potential orthodontic concerns.

Whether it's genetic factors, the aftermath of a dental accident, or something else altogether, early intervention can make a world of difference in your kids' dental health!


# How Does Interceptive Orthodontic Treatment Work?

Interceptive orthodontic treatment works by closely monitoring and managing the development of a child's teeth and jaw during their early growth stages.

When a problem is detected, Dr. Lee may take one of two approaches.



The first involves **ongoing observation**, with periodic appointments to ensure the child's dental development remains on track. This approach allows for timely intervention if any issues arise as the child's face and jaw grow.



The second approach is **early intervention**, which includes procedures like baby tooth extraction to make room for the proper emergence of permanent teeth or other treatments that guide the growth of the jaw and teeth into their correct positions.

Early action helps to reduce the risk of more complex and costly problems in the future, setting the foundation for a lifetime of good oral health!

## Why is the Age of 7 the Right Moment for Interceptive Orthodontic Treatment?



The age of 7 is considered the ideal time for interceptive orthodontic treatment because it's when your child's first adult molars typically emerge.

At this stage, Dr. Lee can effectively evaluate the alignment and spacing between your child's front and back teeth and the relationship between their top and bottom teeth. This early assessment is essential because it allows Dr. Lee to detect any potential orthodontic issues, such as crowded teeth, overbites, or gummy smiles, even before they fully develop.

By analyzing how your child's teeth are starting to align, Dr. Lee can predict their future dental development and take necessary steps to ensure their permanent teeth grow with both beauty and confidence.

Early intervention at this age provides the best chance to guide your child's dental growth in a way that prevents more significant issues down the road.



# Does My Child Need Interceptive Orthodontic Treatment?

Determining whether your child needs interceptive orthodontic treatment begins with a comprehensive evaluation by an orthodontist like Dr. Lee.

This initial assessment is crucial in identifying any early signs that may indicate the need for treatment. Approximately 15-20% of children require early orthodontic intervention to ensure proper tooth and jaw development.

Dr. Lee will look for specific indicators, such as improper jaw growth, which can signal the need for interceptive treatment.

**Protruding Teeth:** When a child's teeth stick out, they are at a higher risk for injuries.

**Early Loss of Baby Teeth:** If baby teeth fall out prematurely, the surrounding teeth may shift, taking up space for permanent teeth.

**Crowded Teeth:** This occurs when permanent teeth do not have enough room to emerge correctly, leading to alignment issues.

**Thumb or Finger Sucking:** These habits can cause various bite problems, such as crossbites.



**Bite Issues:** Problems like underbites, crossbites, or teeth that meet abnormally—or don't meet at all—can all benefit from early intervention.

**Spacing Issues:** Excessive gaps between teeth, missing teeth, or extra teeth also indicate the need for interceptive orthodontics.

**Sleep Apnea:** Children with sleep apnea may experience disrupted breathing during sleep due to improper jaw alignment or other dental issues.

# 3 Types of Interceptive Orthodontic Treatments

## #1: Palatal Expanders for Proper Jaw Growth



The palatal expander is one of the most commonly used appliances in early orthodontic treatment. Some children have a narrow upper palate, leading to overcrowded teeth and other orthodontic issues if not treated promptly.

A palatal expander widens the upper jaw before the bones fuse together after puberty. The device consists of two sides connected by a screw that gently pushes the jaw bones apart. This movement creates the necessary space for your permanent teeth to emerge more easily, improving overall jaw alignment.

The gentle expansion also encourages the growth of new bone cells, ensuring the process is comfortable for your child.

## #2: Space Maintainers

A space maintainer is an orthodontic appliance used when a baby tooth falls out or is removed prematurely. Without a space maintainer, the surrounding teeth may shift and occupy the space meant for the permanent tooth, leading to crowding and misalignment.

Dr. Lee uses a space maintainer to preserve the space, allowing the permanent tooth to erupt in its intended position without complications.



## #3: Baby Tooth Extraction



Baby teeth serve as placeholders for permanent teeth, and they typically fall out naturally around the age of six. However, if a baby tooth lingers longer than it should, it can interfere with the eruption of permanent teeth, particularly the canines.

In some cases, retained baby teeth cause long-term orthodontic problems, such as impacted teeth (i.e., teeth that do not emerge properly). Dr. Lee uses X-ray technology to assess whether your child's canines or other teeth are at risk of becoming impacted.

If necessary, he may recommend the baby tooth extraction to prevent future complications and ensure a smooth transition to a full set of permanent teeth.