



## A brief introduction to Facial Orthopaedics and Orthodontics

### Facial Orthopaedics . . .

Facial Orthopaedics is early treatment that is concerned with modification of facial growth through appliance therapy. Facial Orthopaedics usually involves children between the ages of 4-12. The goal of treatment is to identify abnormal facial and jaw growth, change the pattern of growth and establish a more normal growth pattern. This modification of skeletal growth allows for less extensive and more stable orthodontic correction.

Some typical problems that might involve early treatment are:

- ◇ Protruding teeth, Crowded teeth, Excess spacing between teeth, Overbites, Crossbites, Underbites, Open bites, Narrow upper jaws, Missing or extra teeth and Gummy smiles.

### Orthodontics . . .

Orthodontics is the specialty of aligning or straightening teeth. Orthodontics involves more than just making the teeth straight. It is also important that the teeth fit together and function properly. Properly aligned teeth allow the jaw and Temporomandibular Joints (TMJ, the jaw joint) to function properly without pain. Both children and adults can benefit from orthodontic treatment.

### Why Screen by Age 7? . . .

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children have an orthodontic screening no later than age 7.

- The posterior occlusion is established when the first molars erupt. At that time, one can evaluate the antero-posterior and transverse relationships of the occlusion, as well as discover any functional shifts.
- Incisors have begun to erupt and problems can be detected such as crowding, habits, deep bites, open bites and some facial asymmetries.
- For some, a timely screening will lead to significant treatment benefits; for most, the principal immediate benefit is a parent's peace of mind.

### The Benefits of Early Treatment . . .

For those patients who have clear indications for early intervention, early treatment presents the opportunity to:

- Influence jaw growth in a positive manner
- Harmonise width of the dental arches
- Improve eruption patterns
- Lower risk of trauma to protruded upper incisors
- Correct harmful oral habits, thumb-sucking etc.
- Improve aesthetics and self-esteem
- Simplify and/or shorten treatment time for later corrective orthodontics
- Reduce likelihood of impacted permanent teeth
- Improve some speech problems
- Preserve or gain space for erupting permanent teeth