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Braces Basics

For many of us, getting braces is a rite of passage in childhood. If you're a parent considering braces for your child, you may have many questions about the treatment. Here are answers to some of the questions to prepare you for braces.

Q: What are the most common reasons braces are recommended for children?

A: Most orthodontic problems are genetic because the size of your jaws and shape of your teeth are inherited from your parents. And other spacing and bite issues can develop over time due to accidents or habits. There are three common reasons dentists recommend braces:

1. *Crowding* – Crowding means that teeth aren't fitting properly in the jaw. When your teeth are crowded, it not only affects the look of your teeth but also may prevent teeth from being properly cleaned. Correcting the crowded teeth may improve the teeth's appearance and improve overall health by helping prevent cavities and gum disease, as those crowded teeth can often hide plaque and make that plaque hard to remove.
2. *Spacing* – There may be extra spaces or irregular spaces between teeth. Closing these gaps can give your mouth a more pleasant appearance and not allow food and other items to get packed into those spaces.
3. *Bite* – Teeth may not align correctly when biting.

Q: At what age should my child visit an orthodontist?

A: The most important thing to do is take your child for regular dental check-ups. Your dentist will be able to track any potential issues and help determine when your child may need to see an orthodontist.

Q: How can I help my child care for their braces?

A: Braces can create opportunities for bacteria to thrive when not cared for properly. Food that gets stuck in wired braces feeds bacteria, which can lead to tooth decay and gum disease. Certain foods can also damage braces like gum and sticky candy. Brushing after every meal and flossing daily to remove food particles and prevent cavities is very important.

Q: How long does the treatment last?

A: The duration depends on the severity of the issue and the type of treatment. Your orthodontist will be able to provide a treatment timeline.

Q: How much do braces cost?

A: Orthodontic treatment is an investment, not just in terms of money but also health and self-esteem. With your State of Iowa dental plan, orthodontics is covered at 50% for children through age 18, with a lifetime maximum of \$1,500.

Q: What should I do next if I think my child may need braces?

A: If you think your child might benefit from braces, schedule an appointment with your dentist to discuss your concerns and find out your options.

For more information on orthodontics, visit the [Delta Dental of Iowa blog](#). To learn more about your Delta Dental benefits, visit www.deltadentalia.com to log in to Member Connection or find a provider near you.

Sources:

Delta Dental, "[How to tell if your child needs braces](#)".

American Association of Orthodontists, <https://aaoinfo.org/child-orthodontics/>.

American Association of Orthodontists, "[Your Orthodontic Journey: Questions Uncovered](#)".