

Braces aren't just for teens

Parents find themselves marking life's milestones with their children's accomplishments: first words, first steps, first tooth. It's when the first tooth breaks through the gums that some parents begin to show concern about their child's orthodontic future. For as long as many parents can remember, braces were a rite-of-passage for teenagers – but times have changed.

Children at younger ages are being referred for orthodontic treatment, often to head off more serious dental problems due to an untreated issue.

Bloomington's Kim Berentsen, a state licensed dental assistant at Bracesetters, recommends that children age seven or eight be referred to an orthodontist to head off more serious problems down the road. In fact, she says, younger patients may cause more damage to their teeth and gums if the underlying condition, such as a cross bite (when the upper arch of the palate is narrower than the lower arch and would result in the use of an expander) or an overbite (when the upper teeth stick out in relation to the lower teeth) are left untreated.

"Younger patients are usually seen for posterior [back teeth] or anterior [front teeth] cross bites [also called an under bite]. These patients are usually between the ages of 8 and 12," explains orthodontist Kevin Boyle, DMD, of Windsor Dental

KIDS AS YOUNG AS 8 ARE GETTING ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT - AND SOME PARENTS ARE TOO!

By SHARON MACGREGOR



in New Windsor. "Posterior cross bites are commonly treated with expansion; anterior cross bites will also use an advancing arch to correct the under bite."

According to Boyle, an advancing arch is an arch wire that expresses its "movement" toward the front teeth to move them forward.

An expander, an apparatus that is attached to braces on the teeth, may only be used in a younger patient, usually 7 or 8 years old, because it actually moves bone. Once a child has reached the teen years, the sutures that connect each half of the upper jaw have fused together and a surgery to disconnect the bone may be required.

The expander is used when the upper arch is narrower than the bottom, so the upper and lower teeth do not align properly. The appliance requires the patient (or parent) to continually tighten the tension screw. Gradually, the upper and lower arches will be the same width and the teeth will align.

This process will likely cause a large gap between the two front teeth, and a new connection will form in the bone that has been separated. However, braces will likely be required once the expander is removed to correct the gap between the two front teeth or other pre-existing straightening concerns.

Even if your child doesn't yet have all of her permanent teeth, orthodontic treatment is still an option. Eight-year-old Tara MacGregor of Pearl River, does not yet have all of her permanent teeth, so she has metal braces only on her upper permanent teeth. When her lower permanent teeth come in, probably by age 13, she will have braces on

4 things to keep your child smiling

1. Make sure your child receives regular dental exams and an initial orthodontist exam by age 8 or earlier if recommended by your dentist.

2. Talk to other parents and find out what you can about their child's experiences. A bit of casual research can go a long way in finding the right orthodontist.

3. Ask a lot of questions at the initial exam. Write down some of your concerns and bring them to the office; if your child has questions, do the same.

4. Find out about payment options. If it is not an exact fit, ask about other treatment options. Do not delay treatment for fear of the fee.

those teeth as well.

Braces are typically worn for about 24 months, though some children may need longer or shorter treatment. Once the braces come off, recommended treatment includes the use of a retainer, which should be worn regularly.

Berentsen advises all who receive orthodontic treatment to wear their retainers. "Most of the adult patients we see did not wear their retainers. It's not their fault – it wasn't stressed as a very important part of treatment until just a few years ago."

Most parents want the best for their children, but some still hesitate in seeking orthodontic treatment. Both Berentsen and Boyle

(Continued on Page 28)

For a Smile That's Good for Life

Braces
ROCK



Free Initial Exam

Family Orthodontics

Dr. Haesin S. Jung, D.D.S., P.C.

Dr. Oran Pachter, D.M.D.

Middletown 845-343-8212 • Port Jervis 845-856-6800 • Warwick 845-986-6898

www.orthobite.com

Because A Smile Can Say So Much



Comprehensive Family Dentistry in a Comfortable, Friendly Atmosphere

Most
Insurances
Accepted

845-462-2727

**Olusola Runsewe, DDS
Red Oaks Dental**

2064 New Hackensack Rd
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603



Brush your teeth
after Halloween treats



Dr. Maria Karounos Abouezzi

Dental Village Associates



We specialize in Gentle
Family Dentistry For
Both Adults & Children

Most Insurances Accepted

Teeth Whitening · Cosmetic Dentistry
Implants · Crowns · Bridges · Digital Radiography
Latest Techniques & Technology
Member of the American Dental Society

1 Field Court (off Rt. 9)
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Tel: 845-452-5617

Credit Cards Accepted • Care Credit Accepted

Beautiful Smiles and Happy Kids!

*Painless, Quality Dental
Care for Children*

- Air Abrasion – *No Drilling!*
- Composite Fillings –
You Can't Even See Them!

Featuring Joann
Cassimatis, D.D.S.



Call to Schedule an Appointment
(845) 342-5411

Insurance Plans Welcome
Se Habla Español

Gentle Dentistry
2 Albert St., Middletown, NY

BRACES

(Continued from Page 27)

agree that most patients and parents delay orthodontic services due to fear of the cost, which can vary widely. For example, the experience of the orthodontist you choose, the area of the country where you live, and the degree of correction needed for your teeth will help determine the final cost. On average, patients should expect braces to cost between \$2,000 and \$6,000.

However, there are options, especially for those who are uninsured or feel they have an inadequate dental plan. Financing is often available to ensure lower monthly payments over a longer period of time, but other payment methods may be available as well.

Investing in your child's teeth

will provide an invaluable lifelong return on your dollars. Imagine the first time they have their picture taken once the braces have been removed and they are no longer hesitant to smile with their teeth exposed. I know – I also once wore braces, my older son is completing



What's new in braces? Learn about orthodontic options at hvparent.com

cosmetic treatment following his orthodontics, and my younger son is in the middle of treatment. Having a family portrait in which everyone smiles, together, will be priceless.

Sharon MacGregor is a freelance writer and mom of two in Bloomingburg. Check out her blog at hvparent.com!

Pediatric Dentistry



Dr. Geri Lynn Waldman

Specializing in
Children from
Infancy to Teens

Children with
Special Needs
Welcome!

New Patients Welcome.

Emergencies Treated with
Courtesy & Kindness.

Nitrous oxide (laughing gas),
oral sedation & general
anesthesia available



Dolson Avenue Dental

75 Dolson Avenue,
Middletown, NY

845-342-1533

More parents are getting braces too!

According to the Bracesetters website (bracesetters.com), 25 percent of all orthodontic patients are adults.

Kathy MacGregor, a 40ish mom in Pearl River, and her 8-year-old daughter, Tara, are both receiving corrective treatment. Kathy had braces as a teen, but as an adult her teeth have shifted and some crowding of her lower teeth has become a problem. She wears ceramic braces on her top teeth, since they are tooth-colored and therefore less noticeable, with traditional metal braces on her bottom teeth.

Although orthodontists now stress the long-term use of retainers following treatment, MacGregor says she does not recall anyone saying a retainer could be worn for the rest of her life – and adds she would have preferred wearing a retainer than going through a lengthy procedure of treatment.

Orthodontist Kevin Boyle, DMD, of Windsor Dental in New Windsor sees a number of adult patients, many of whom opt for less visible treatment. “The most common treatment for adults is the clear aligners. Treatment can run from 9-18 months.”

“Many patients need to know the clear trays are most suited for patients who require less extensive movement,” cautions licensed dental assistant Kim Berentsen, “and that they will need to replace the tray once shifting of the teeth takes place.”