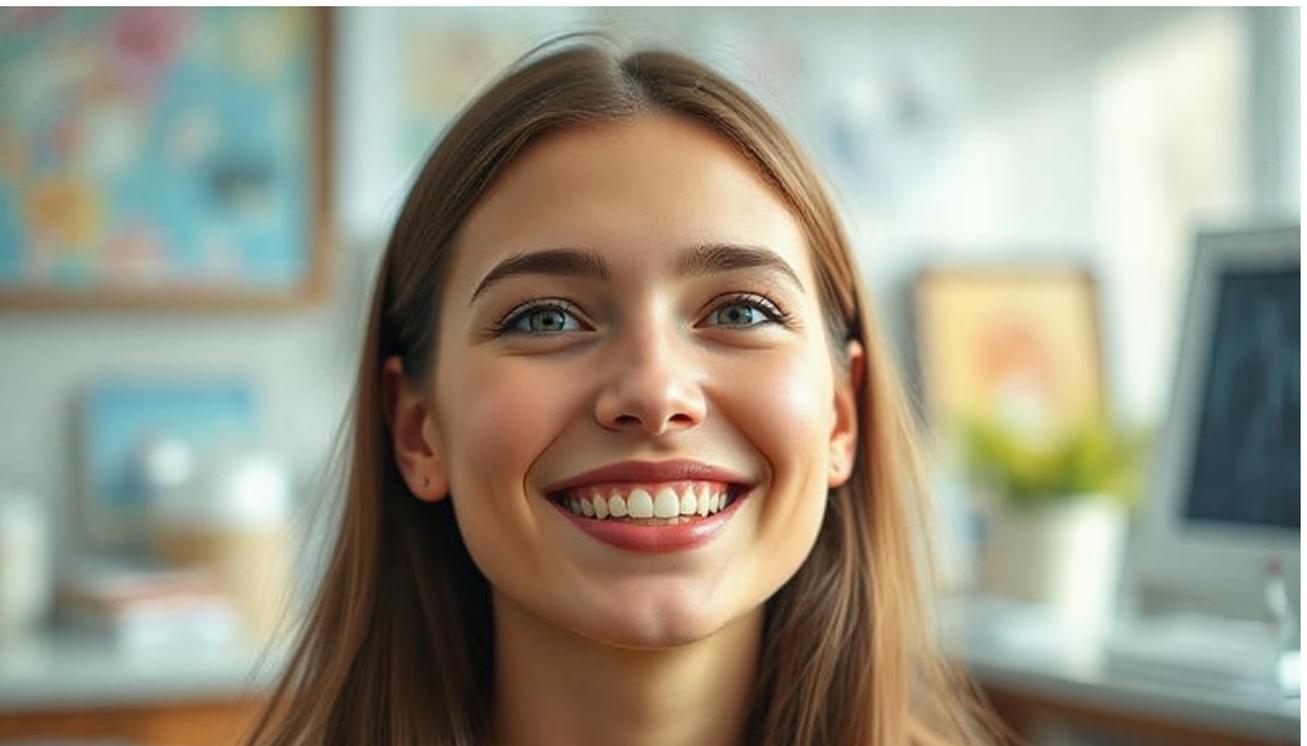




- **Reasons for Wearing Retainers After Treatment**
Reasons for Wearing Retainers After Treatment Differences Between Removable and Fixed Retention Establishing a Routine to Prevent Tooth Shifting Oral Hygiene Tips for Retainer Care Monitoring Changes After Active Orthodontic Phase Factors That Influence Retention Duration Communicating the Value of Long Term Follow Ups How Retainers Support Jaw Positioning Over Time Signs That Signal the Need for Retainer Adjustments Materials Used in Crafting Effective Retainers Incorporating Retainer Wear Into Daily Habits Assessing Compliance and Its Impact on Stability
- **Basics of Brushing With Braces or Aligners**
Basics of Brushing With Braces or Aligners Practical Tips for Flossing Around Orthodontic Wires Understanding the Role of Mouthwash in Oral Care Techniques to Prevent White Spots on Enamel Avoiding Common Foods That Damage Orthodontic Appliances Solutions for Managing Gum Irritation and Inflammation Tools That Simplify Cleaning With Orthodontic Hardware Importance of Regular Dental Checkups During Treatment Risk Factors for Plaque Buildup With Braces Adapting Hygiene Routines for Clear Aligner Users Balancing Oral Care With Busy Lifestyles Early Intervention for Minor Issues That Escalate
- **About Us**



Okay, so you've got braces or aligners. Awesome! Straightening your teeth is a big deal, a real investment in your smile and your overall health. But here's the thing: while you're on this journey, oral hygiene isn't just important, it's *extra* important. Retainers are often needed after braces to maintain alignment **Early orthodontic intervention** child. Think of it like this: your braces or aligners are like little obstacle courses for food particles and bacteria. They create nooks and crannies that are way harder to clean.

Normally, brushing twice a day is enough to keep the bad guys at bay. But with orthodontic appliances, those bad guys have more places to hide and party. If you don't step up your cleaning game, you're basically inviting plaque to set up camp around your brackets, under your wires, or even inside your aligners. And plaque, that sticky film of bacteria, loves to cause trouble.

What kind of trouble? Well, think cavities. All that sugar and starch trapped around your braces gets turned into acid by the bacteria, and that acid eats away at your enamel. You could end up with white spots around your brackets after they come off, which kinda defeats the purpose of getting straight teeth in the first place!

Then there's gum disease. Inflamed, bleeding gums aren't just unpleasant; they can actually affect the bone that supports your teeth. In severe cases, this can even impact the long-term success of your orthodontic treatment.

And let's not forget bad breath. Trapped food particles and bacteria? Yeah, that's a recipe for some serious halitosis. Not exactly the confidence booster you're hoping for during your smile transformation.

So, by taking extra care with your oral hygiene during orthodontic treatment, you're protecting your teeth from cavities, keeping your gums healthy, preventing bad breath, and ultimately ensuring that you get the best possible results from your braces or aligners. It's a bit more work, sure, but it's totally worth it for that healthy, beautiful smile you're working towards! Consider it an essential part of the process, not just an optional extra.

*** Preventing teeth from shifting back to their original positions as the jawbone settles. —**

- *** Maintaining the corrected tooth alignment achieved during braces.**
- *** Preventing teeth from shifting back to their original positions as the jawbone settles.**
- *** Protecting the investment made in orthodontic treatment.**
- *** Ensuring the long-term stability of the bite and smile.**
- *** Supporting proper jaw growth and development in younger children.**
- *** Avoiding the need for future, potentially more extensive, orthodontic intervention.**
- *** Contributing to overall oral health by preventing crowding and misalignment.**

Alright, let's talk about the essentials. So, you've got braces or aligners. Welcome to the club! Straight teeth are awesome, but keeping them clean with all that hardware in your mouth takes a little extra effort. Think of it like this: you wouldn't try to paint a masterpiece with a dull brush, right? Same goes for cleaning your teeth. You need the right tools to get the job done.

First, and this is a biggie, you're going to need a good toothbrush. We're not talking about just any old brush. Look for one with soft bristles – your gums will thank you. Some people swear by electric toothbrushes, especially ones with rotating heads. They can really get into those hard-to-reach spots around brackets and under wires. If you stick with a manual brush, make sure it's got a small head so you can maneuver around all the obstacles.

Next up: floss. Oh, the dreaded floss! I know, I know, it's a pain. But seriously, it's non-negotiable. Food gets trapped in places your toothbrush just can't reach. Floss threaders are your best friend here. They're like little plastic needles that help you guide the floss under your archwire. It takes practice, but trust me, you'll get the hang of it. There's also floss specifically

designed for braces, often with a stiffened end to make threading easier.

And then there's the interdental brush, sometimes called a proxabrush or "Christmas tree brush." These tiny little brushes are shaped like miniature pine trees and are fantastic for cleaning between your brackets and wires. They're great for dislodging stubborn bits of food and plaque.

Don't forget mouthwash! An antimicrobial mouthwash can help kill bacteria and keep your gums healthy. Look for one that contains fluoride to help strengthen your enamel.

Finally, a small mirror can be a lifesaver. It helps you see all those tricky spots and make sure you're not missing anything. You could even use your phone's camera!

So, there you have it. Your essential toolkit for keeping those pearly whites sparkling while you're on your journey to a straighter smile. It might seem like a lot at first, but with a little practice and dedication, it'll become second nature. And remember, your orthodontist and dental hygienist are always there to help and answer any questions you might have. Good luck, and happy brushing!

*** Protecting the investment made in orthodontic treatment.**

Okay, so you've got braces or maybe you're rocking those clear aligners – that's awesome! You're on your way to a killer smile. But here's a truth bomb: keeping your teeth clean with these things requires a little more effort than your average brush-and-go routine. Think of it like this: braces and aligners are like tiny obstacle courses for food particles. They love to hide, and if you don't evict them, they'll throw a party that leads to plaque, cavities, and even gum problems. Nobody wants that.

That's where the step-by-step brushing technique comes in. It's not rocket science, but it's important to be thorough. First, you need the right tools. A soft-bristled toothbrush is your best friend. Some people prefer electric toothbrushes, and those can be great too, just make sure the head is small enough to maneuver around your hardware. And don't forget floss threaders or interdental brushes – those little guys are lifesavers for getting between brackets and under wires.

Now, for the brushing itself. Start by rinsing your mouth with water to loosen up any debris. Then, apply fluoride toothpaste to your brush. Angle the brush at about 45 degrees to your gumline and gently brush in small, circular motions. Spend a good amount of time on each tooth, making sure to get all surfaces – the outside, the inside, and the chewing surface.

The real trick with braces is brushing *around* the brackets. Brush above the bracket, then below the bracket, and then directly on the bracket. Think of it like you're giving each bracket a little hug with your toothbrush. Don't be afraid to use a little pressure, but be gentle enough not to damage your gums or the braces themselves.

If you're using aligners, the brushing routine is a little different. You still need to brush your teeth thoroughly after every meal before putting your aligners back in. And, importantly, you need to clean your aligners too! Rinse them with lukewarm water and gently brush them with a soft toothbrush and a little bit of toothpaste.

Finally, remember to floss! Flossing with braces takes patience, which is why floss threaders are so helpful. These little plastic needles help you get the floss under the wire and between your teeth. Gently slide the floss up and down, hugging the sides of each tooth.

The whole process might seem a bit tedious at first, but trust me, it becomes second nature. Think of it as an investment in your beautiful smile. Taking the time to brush and floss properly will keep your teeth healthy and sparkling clean throughout your treatment, making all the effort totally worth it in the end. And remember, your orthodontist is your ally! Don't hesitate to ask them for tips and tricks to make your brushing routine even more effective.





*** Ensuring the long-term stability of the bite and smile.**

Okay, so your kiddo's got aligners? Awesome! Straight teeth are in their future, but getting there means nailing the brushing basics. It's not rocket science, but it's definitely a step up from their usual quick scrub. Think of it like this: those aligners are like tiny little shields protecting their teeth, but also trapping everything *against* their teeth. So, we need a game

plan.

First things first: frequency. Brushing after *every* meal and snack is the golden rule. I know, I know, it sounds like a lot, but it's essential. Food particles love to hang out under aligners, creating a breeding ground for bacteria that can lead to cavities and, yuck, bad breath. Carry a travel toothbrush and toothpaste in their backpack or lunchbox – instant brushing station ready to go!

Next up, technique. Remind them to brush gently, but thoroughly. Imagine they're giving each tooth a little hug with the bristles. Pay extra attention to the gumline where food loves to hide. A soft-bristled toothbrush is key here; hard bristles can irritate gums. And don't forget the tongue! That's another bacteria hotspot.

Now, let's talk about the aligners themselves. They need love too! After brushing their teeth, they should gently brush the aligners with a separate toothbrush and some mild soap (not toothpaste, as it can scratch them!). Rinse them thoroughly before popping them back in.

Finally, make it fun! Let them pick out a fun toothbrush or toothpaste flavor. Turn on some music while they brush. Make it a routine, not a chore. And most importantly, be patient! It takes time to get used to brushing with aligners. Celebrate their successes, and gently remind them when they forget. With a little guidance, they'll be pros in no time, rocking a healthy, dazzling smile!

*** Supporting proper jaw growth and development in younger children.**

Alright, let's talk about the nitty-gritty of brushing with braces or aligners. We all know *why* we need to brush – to keep our teeth healthy and avoid the dreaded sugar bugs. But when you've got brackets, wires, or even those clear aligners, it's not quite as simple as a quick once-over.

Think of it like this: your mouth is now a tiny obstacle course for food particles and plaque. And the three main hurdles? Brackets stuck to your teeth, the wires connecting them, and, of course, your gums. These are the spots where the bad stuff loves to hang out.

Those brackets, especially, are like little magnets for debris. Food gets trapped around their edges, and plaque builds up in the corners. That's why you gotta be meticulous. Angle your brush up above the bracket, brush down below it, and then directly onto it. Don't be shy; give each one a little extra attention.

Then there are the wires. They create these tiny, hard-to-reach spaces where plaque can thrive. A good trick here is to use an interdental brush – those little Christmas-tree-shaped brushes. They're perfect for getting between the wire and your teeth to dislodge any sneaky particles.

And finally, let's not forget the gums! Braces and aligners can sometimes irritate your gums, making them red, swollen, and more prone to bleeding. Gentle brushing along the gumline is crucial to stimulate circulation and keep them healthy. Think soft bristles and gentle, circular motions. No aggressive scrubbing!

Basically, when you're brushing with braces or aligners, it's all about being thorough and focusing on those problem areas. It might take a little longer, but trust me, your teeth (and your orthodontist) will thank you for it in the long run. Think of it as an investment in that sparkling, straight smile you're working towards!



*** Avoiding the need for future, potentially more extensive, orthodontic intervention.**

Okay, let's talk about making brushing fun for kids with braces or aligners. I know, I know, "fun" and "braces" don't usually hang out in the same sentence. But trust me, it's possible! Think about it: brushing already feels like a chore to most kids. Add in the metal jungle of braces or the extra steps with aligners, and suddenly it's a dental disaster waiting to happen.

So, how do we turn this around? First, ditch the nagging. Seriously. Instead, become a brushing buddy. Brush alongside them, making silly faces in the mirror, or even turning it into a mini competition (who can brush the longest, or who can make the most bubbles?).

Next, leverage technology! There are some awesome electric toothbrushes with built-in timers and even apps that turn brushing into a game. These can really help kids focus and stay motivated. Think of it like leveling up in a video game, but instead of slaying dragons, they're vanquishing plaque!

Don't underestimate the power of personalization either. Let them pick their favorite toothbrush (soft bristles are key!), toothpaste flavor (within reason, of course!), and even a special cup for rinsing. It's about giving them a sense of ownership and making brushing feel less like a punishment and more like a routine they control.

And finally, celebrate the small wins! Every good brushing session deserves a little praise. A simple "Wow, those braces are sparkling!" or a high-five can go a long way. Remember, consistency is key, and making brushing fun and engaging is the best way to ensure they're taking care of their teeth (and their investment in that perfect smile!) with a little enthusiasm, even with all that extra hardware.

*** Contributing to overall oral health by preventing crowding and misalignment.**

Okay, so your kid's got braces or aligners, and brushing their teeth has become...well, let's just say it's not exactly a highlight of their day (or yours, probably). We've all been there. It's frustrating when they're not getting all the gunk out, and you're worried about cavities and gum problems. Don't panic! It's definitely solvable.

First, remember that patience is key. This is a new skill, and it takes time to master. Instead of nagging, try to be encouraging. Maybe start by brushing with them. Show them the best techniques: the angled brush around the brackets, the gentle circles on the gums, the floss threader under the wire. Lead by example. Make it a team effort, at least for a little while.

If they're just rushing through it, try setting a timer. Two minutes feels like an eternity when you're a kid, but it's the recommended amount of time for a thorough cleaning. You can even find fun toothbrushing apps that play music or make it a game. Anything to make it less of a chore and more engaging.

Sometimes, the issue isn't motivation, it's technique. Are they using the right tools? A soft-bristled toothbrush designed for braces is essential. Interdental brushes (those little "Christmas tree" shaped ones) are fantastic for getting between brackets and wires. And don't forget the floss threaders! They're a lifesaver for getting floss under the archwire.

If you've tried everything and they're still struggling, don't hesitate to reach out to their orthodontist or dentist. They can provide personalized advice and demonstrate proper brushing techniques. Sometimes, hearing it from a professional can make a difference. They might also recommend a disclosing tablet, which stains the plaque so your child can see exactly where they're missing. Visual proof can be a powerful motivator!

Ultimately, remember that good oral hygiene with braces or aligners is a marathon, not a sprint. It's about establishing good habits that will last a lifetime. Be patient, be supportive, and celebrate small victories. Before you know it, they'll be brushing like a pro, and you can breathe a sigh of relief!

Okay, so your kid's got braces or aligners, right? That's a big step towards a perfect smile, but it also opens up a whole new world of potential food traps and plaque parties in their mouth. And that's where you, the parent, come in. Think of yourselves as the oral hygiene coaches, the cheerleaders, and sometimes, the gentle enforcers of good brushing habits.

It's not just about saying, "Did you brush?" anymore. It's about understanding that braces and aligners make brushing way more complicated. Food gets stuck in brackets, under wires, and all around those aligners like it's nobody's business. So, your role is to help them understand *why* proper brushing is so crucial now. We're talking about avoiding swollen gums, white spots (decalcification – nobody wants those!), and even longer treatment times if things get out of hand.

Be supportive. Maybe even brush *with* them sometimes. Show them the best angles to get those tricky spots. Help them floss – seriously, flossing with braces is an art form! And don't be afraid to invest in the right tools: a good electric toothbrush with a small head, interdental brushes (those little Christmas tree-shaped ones are lifesavers), and maybe even a water flosser.

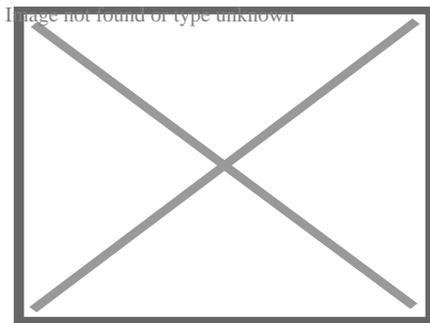
Keep an eye on what they're eating too. Sticky, sugary stuff is the enemy. Remind them to rinse their mouth after meals, especially when they're out and about and can't brush right away.

Ultimately, you're teaching them a lifelong skill. Good oral hygiene habits now will not only ensure a successful orthodontic treatment but also set them up for a lifetime of healthy smiles. So, be patient, be persistent, and remember that a little encouragement (and maybe a new toothbrush every now and then) can go a long way!



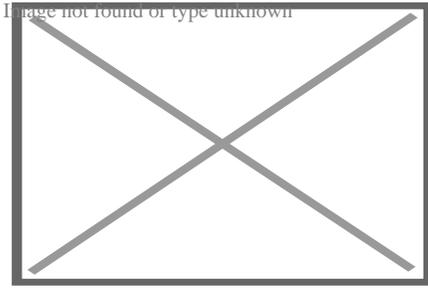
About thumb sucking

For other uses, see Thumbsucker (disambiguation).



Infants may use pacifiers or their thumb or fingers to soothe themselves

Newborn baby thumb sucking



A bonnet macaque thumb sucking

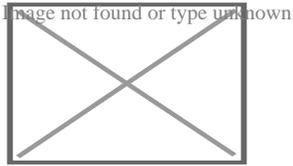
Thumb sucking is a behavior found in humans, chimpanzees, captive ring-tailed lemurs,^[1] and other primates.^[2] It usually involves placing the thumb into the mouth and rhythmically repeating sucking contact for a prolonged duration. It can also be accomplished with any organ within reach (such as other fingers and toes) and is considered to be soothing and therapeutic for the person. As a child develops the habit, it will usually develop a "favourite" finger to suck on.

At birth, a baby will reflexively suck any object placed in its mouth; this is the sucking reflex responsible for breastfeeding. From the first time they engage in nutritive feeding, infants learn that the habit can not only provide valuable nourishment, but also a great deal of pleasure, comfort, and warmth. Whether from a mother, bottle, or pacifier, this behavior, over time, begins to become associated with a very strong, self-soothing, and pleasurable oral sensation. As the child grows older, and is eventually weaned off the nutritional sucking, they can either develop alternative means for receiving those same feelings of physical and emotional fulfillment, or they can continue experiencing those pleasantly soothing experiences by beginning to suck their thumbs or fingers.^[3] This reflex disappears at about 4 months of age; thumb sucking is not purely an instinctive behavior and therefore can last much longer.^[4] Moreover, ultrasound scans have revealed that thumb sucking can start before birth, as early as 15 weeks from conception; whether this behavior is voluntary or due to random movements of the fetus in the womb is not conclusively known.

Thumb sucking generally stops by the age of 4 years. Some older children will retain the habit, which can cause severe dental problems.^[5] While most dentists would recommend breaking the habit as early as possible, it has been shown that as long as the habit is broken before the onset of permanent teeth, at around 5 years old, the damage is reversible.^[6] Thumb sucking is sometimes retained into adulthood and may be due to simply habit continuation. Using anatomical and neurophysiological data a study has found that sucking the thumb is said to stimulate receptors within the brain which cause the release of mental and physical tension.^[7]

Dental problems and prevention

[edit]



Alveolar prognathism, caused by thumb sucking and tongue thrusting in a 7-year-old girl.

Percentage of children who suck their thumbs (data from two researchers)

Age	Kantorowicz ^[4]	Brückl ^[8]
0–1	92%	66%
1–2	93%	—
2–3	87%	—
3–4	86%	—
4–5	85%	25%
5–6	76%	—
Over 6	—	9%

Most children stop sucking on thumbs, pacifiers or other objects on their own between 2 and 4 years of age. No harm is done to their teeth or jaws until permanent teeth start to erupt. The only time it might cause concern is if it goes on beyond 6 to 8 years of age. At this time, it may affect the shape of the oral cavity or dentition.^[9] During thumbsucking the tongue sits in a lowered position and so no longer balances the forces from the buccal group of musculature. This results in narrowing of the upper arch and a posterior crossbite. Thumbsucking can also cause the maxillary central incisors to tip labially and the mandibular incisors to tip lingually, resulting in an increased overjet and anterior open bite malocclusion, as the thumb rests on them during the course of sucking. In addition to proclination of the maxillary incisors, mandibular incisors retrusion will also happen. Transverse maxillary deficiency gives rise to posterior crossbite, ultimately leading to a Class II malocclusion.^[10]

Children may experience difficulty in swallowing and speech patterns due to the adverse changes. Aside from the damaging physical aspects of thumb sucking, there are also additional risks, which unfortunately, are present at all ages. These include increased risk of infection from communicable diseases, due to the simple fact that non-sterile thumbs are covered with infectious agents, as well as many social implications. Some children experience social difficulties, as often children are taunted by their peers for engaging in what they can consider to be an “immature” habit. This taunting often results the child being rejected by the group or being subjected to ridicule by their peers, which can cause understandable psychological stress.^[11]

Methods to stop sucking habits are divided into 2 categories: Preventive Therapy and Appliance Therapy.[¹⁰]

Examples to prevent their children from sucking their thumbs include the use of bitterants or piquant substances on their child's hands—although this is not a procedure encouraged by the American Dental Association[⁹] or the Association of Pediatric Dentists. Some suggest that positive reinforcements or calendar rewards be given to encourage the child to stop sucking their thumb.

The American Dental Association recommends:

- Praise children for not sucking, instead of scolding them when they do.
- If a child is sucking their thumb when feeling insecure or needing comfort, focus instead on correcting the cause of the anxiety and provide comfort to your child.
- If a child is sucking on their thumb because of boredom, try getting the child's attention with a fun activity.
- Involve older children in the selection of a means to cease thumb sucking.
- The pediatric dentist can offer encouragement to the child and explain what could happen to the child's teeth if he/she does not stop sucking.
- Only if these tips are ineffective, remind the child of the habit by bandaging the thumb or putting a sock/glove on the hand at night.
- Other orthodontics[¹²] for appliances are available.

The British Orthodontic Society recommends the same advice as ADA.[¹³]

A Cochrane review was conducted to review the effectiveness of a variety of clinical interventions for stopping thumb-sucking. The study showed that orthodontic appliances and psychological interventions (positive and negative reinforcement) were successful at preventing thumb sucking in both the short and long term, compared to no treatment.[¹⁴] Psychological interventions such as habit reversal training and decoupling have also proven useful in body focused repetitive behaviors.[¹⁵]

Clinical studies have shown that appliances such as TGuards can be 90% effective in breaking the thumb or finger sucking habit. Rather than use bitterants or piquants, which are not endorsed by the ADA due to their causing of discomfort or pain, TGuards break the habit simply by removing the suction responsible for generating the feelings of comfort and nurture.[¹⁶] Other appliances are available, such as fabric thumb guards, each having their own benefits and features depending on the child's age, willpower and motivation. Fixed intraoral appliances have been known to create problems during eating as children when removing their appliances may have a risk of breaking them. Children with mental illness may have reduced compliance.[¹⁰]

Some studies mention the use of extra-oral habit reminder appliance to treat thumb sucking. An alarm is triggered when the child tries to suck the thumb to stop the child from this habit.[¹⁰][¹⁷] However, more studies are required to prove the effectiveness of

external devices on thumb sucking.

Children's books

[edit]

- In Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*, the "thumb-sucker" Konrad is punished by having both of his thumbs cut off.
- There are several children's books on the market with the intention to help the child break the habit of thumb sucking. Most of them provide a story the child can relate to and some coping strategies.^[18] Experts recommend to use only books in which the topic of thumb sucking is shown in a positive and respectful way.^[19]

See also

[edit]

- Stereotypic movement disorder
- Prognathism

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External links

[edit]

- "Oral Health Topics: Thumbsucking". *American Dental Association*. Archived from the original on 2010-06-19.
- "Pacifiers & Thumb Sucking". *Canadian Dental Association*.

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