

# **YOUR KID'S MOUTH MATTERS**

- ✓ **NO CAVITIES**
- ✓ **NO WISDOM TEETH REMOVAL**
- ✓ **NO BRACES**
- ✓ **NO DECAY**





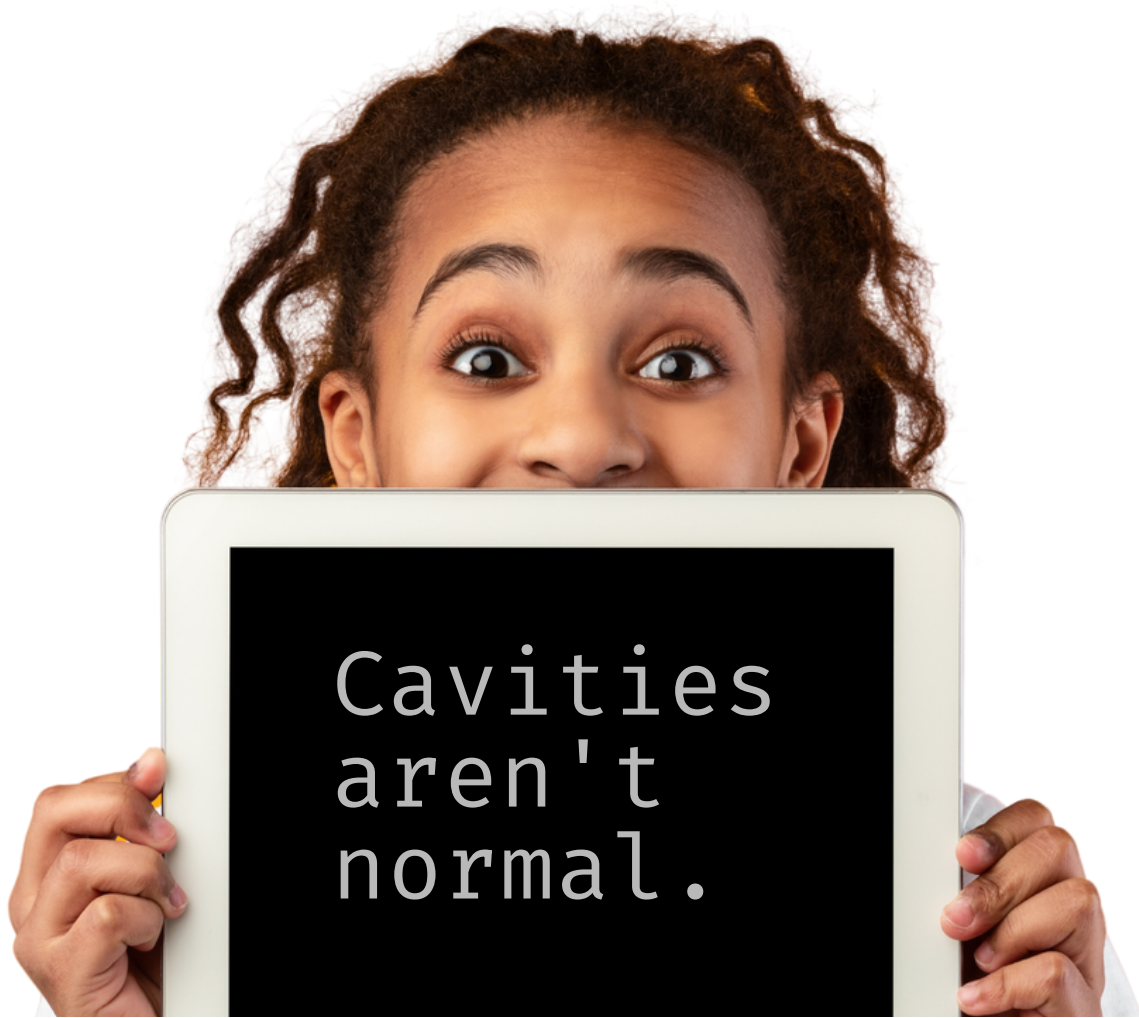
THEY SURE ARE HANDY WHEN YOU SMILE  
SO KEEP YOUR TEETH AROUND A WHILE!

Dr. Seuss

Cavities. Braces. Wisdom teeth removal. Discoloration. Mouth breathing.

These have become increasingly common in our society, but were never meant to be normal! Did you know that each one of these can be avoided? These issues have only recently plagued our children in the last century or so, and there are many cultures today who do not struggle with these at all! So what happened? How do we fix this? Is it possible for our kids to have healthier smiles and bodies simply by making a few changes?

In the next few chapters, we will dive into each of these questions and more! Read on to learn how to raise healthy kids with beautiful smiles!





## **LAUREN DAHL**

### **OWNER AND FOUNDER OF WONDER**

Hi, I'm Lauren! Fifteen years ago I started on a relentless pursuit of eliminating all toxins from my home and body. Soon after, I suffered from significant oral health concerns while pregnant. I knew something needed to change, and began to passionately research everything related to holistic oral wellness.

After years of researching, perfecting recipes, and creating my own line of Remineralizing Tooth Powder, I noticed my oral health improve drastically. What started as an interest simply for myself turned into a passion that I had to share, and Wonder Oral Wellness was born! My hope is that you find these pages helpful wherever you might find yourself on this journey of oral wellness.

YOUR KID'S MOUTH MATTERS

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# 1

C H A P T E R

## **INTRODUCTION**

YOUR KID'S MOUTH MATTERS

# INTRODUCTION

Did you know that more than half of children get cavities in their primary (baby) teeth, and more than half of teenagers get cavities in their permanent teeth? More than that, it is estimated that 45-75% of children need braces for functional alignment or even to improve the shape of their face. These statistics are staggering, but what is more shocking is that we have accepted this as the norm.


Marcus was 3 years old when he went to the dentist for the first time. After a brief examination, the dentist told his mom that he had 8 cavities. She was mortified. She tried to do everything right, and was baffled as to how this could happen. She ended up getting a second opinion who said that Marcus only had 2 cavities that needed to be filled. His mom was relieved, but questioned how there could be such a difference in professional opinions. Despite getting regular dental cleanings, brushing and flossing as recommended, and minimizing sugar, Marcus still suffered from a string of cavities throughout his childhood. Additionally, his parents noticed that he would sleep walk most nights and had some inattentiveness in school. As a teenager, he ended up needing braces and also had his wisdom teeth removed. As an adult, he doesn't have a very pronounced jaw line and snores when he sleeps.

Marcus's story is not uncommon. Most every child in our modern society has a similar story with minor changes here and there. We have grown accustomed to this, and unfortunately don't think twice about any one of these issues. But more recently, professionals and parents alike are starting to open their eyes to the possibility that these symptoms may not only be concerning, but that they also may all be connected! More than that, they may all be preventable!

Weston Price, a dentist in the early 20th century, was a catalyst in discovering that while cavities and crooked teeth are common, they are not supposed to be normal. He researched indigenous groups and discovered that they didn't suffer with crooked teeth or cavities like those in a more modern society.

Since Weston Price's research, many dentists and orthodontists have started to question, research, and come up with alternative solutions. They have discovered that kids shouldn't need to have their wisdom teeth pulled, shouldn't need to have braces, and jaws are supposed to be strong and pronounced to not only aid in teeth and jaw alignment but to optimize their airway as well.

The next few chapters are broken down into the different ages of our growing children with things that you can look out for and what you can do about each of them. This is only meant to serve as a starting place for your own oral wellness journey. In the final chapter, there are provided resources to continue your search. We aren't medical or dental professionals, but we hope to open your eyes to things to watch out for, things you can do, and help guide you to know how to find holistic professionals who treat the mouth as part of the whole body.



"Dental caries or tooth decay is recognized as affecting more individuals throughout the so-called civilized world today than any other affection."

Dr. Weston A Price

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# 2

C H A P T E R

## **BABIES & TODDLERS**

YOUR KID'S MOUTH MATTERS



# BABIES & TODDLERS

There is nothing like it. After months and possibly years of waiting, dreaming, and hoping, you finally see their little face. You're captivated, and you would do almost anything to ensure that they stay healthy not just for their infancy but for the rest of their life. We are learning that so much of our health is tied to our mouth. Is it possible that their health could actually originate in that toothless smile? Could that writhing tongue determine their quality of life for decades to come?

Believe it or not, yes! Raising a baby with a healthy mouth can affect everything from their gut health to how they look and countless additional factors throughout their life! Let's dive into more about what this might look like and what we can do about it.



# **TONGUE TIES**

Tongue ties have been getting more traction in recent years. Ignored for decades, tongue tie awareness has been on the rise. Although they might seem insignificant, functional tongue ties can impair a baby's ability to nurse, delay speech, limit your child's ability to breathe through their nose, and a host of other long term issues including neck and shoulder pain and headaches.

If taken care of early, tongue ties can be easily fixed preventing a lifetime of negative side effects. There are many resources and websites out there to help you evaluate whether your child has a tongue tie or not. Many holistically minded dentists are checking children for them on their first visit. If you suspect a tongue tie, we recommend having your child assessed by a dentist, myofunctional therapist, pediatric speech therapist, or a pediatric occupational therapist (see the last chapter for how to find the right professional for your family).

# **MOUTH BREATHING**

In recent decades, mouth versus nose breathing has been researched more thoroughly with undeniable results. How we breathe really can and does impact every system in our body! Mouth breathing often occurs due to an upper airway obstruction that requires the body to get oxygen from it's secondary source, the mouth. This can lead to abnormal bite, chewing habits, sleeping habits and may have a negative impact in their jaw, palate, and fascial development. It has been estimated that up to 56% of children mouth breathe today. This is not surprising when you consider how prevalent cavities and braces are in today's society!

According to Dr. Mark Burhenne, DDS, mouth breathing is the primary reason for cavities even above flossing and brushing. Why? Breathing through the mouth leaves the mouth dry and the teeth void of saliva. Our saliva is packed with good bacteria to help keep our teeth clean and our oral microbiome balanced. When we rid ourselves of its benefits, we are

left with only pathogenic microorganisms to give off acidic waste which eats away at our enamel and creates cavities. Simply put, our mouth is for eating and our nose is for breathing!

If your baby or toddler chronically breathes through their mouth during the day and especially at night, you might consider having them examined by an ENT medical professional to rule out an upper airway obstruction. If no obstruction is suspected and you see your child sleeping with their mouth open, gently close their mouth and hold it for a few seconds. You may need to reposition their head by bringing their chin toward the chest. This simple act can help create a habit of breathing through their nose that will help them for the rest of their life.

\*Never mouth tape an infant or toddler.

## **PACIFIERS & THUMB SUCKING**

A pacifier promotes the non-nutritive sucking in an infant which can soothe the baby but also has an impact on their growing facial structure. With prolonged use, the palate rises and the bite becomes more narrow. The use of pacifiers in infants should be limited to the first 6 months of life. Ideally, they should not be used at all. Babies who self-soothe with their own thumbs are more difficult to break. Because of this, try to avoid the infant forming the habit of thumb-sucking as early as possible.

## **DIET & WEANING**

When your baby is ready for solid foods, avoid purees. Baby led weaning onto solid foods is a great way to promote chewing patterns necessary to strengthen the jaw. This functional movement strengthens the muscles around the jaw and mouth and results in a strong jaw and tongue posture! The best book to learn more about this is Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic by Dr. Sandra Kahn.

# BRUSHING

Primary (baby) teeth have thinner enamel than permanent teeth. That means that it is imperative to keep a healthy oral microbiome (the bacteria world in our mouths) balance. Wipe the gums with a clean cloth before teeth emerge, and begin brushing the first tooth when it cuts. At first, this may look like your child chewing on a toothbrush and progress to brushing 2-3 times a day as they grow.

At this age, the parent will need to be the one to primarily brush the teeth, but the toddler will need to practice too. You may choose to allow them to practice first, and then follow to be sure that the task is done effectively.

Aim to make brushing their teeth fun! Sing a song, make up a dance, use a fun toothbrush or tasty tooth powder. Avoid synthetic ingredients and "flavors" as these can be harmful and toxic to their growing bodies.

It is recommended that children see a dentist 6 months after the first tooth appears and no later than the age of 2. See the last chapter of this book for more information on finding a holistically minded dentist for your baby or toddler.

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# CHAPTER 3

## **YOUNG KIDS**

YOUR KID'S MOUTH MATTERS

# YOUNG KIDS

You blinked and that baby has now grown into a full-blown little kid. It happened slowly. You didn't even notice, but somehow your love has grown right along with those pencil marks on the wall. Some days can feel really challenging. Most days are incredibly rewarding. This child is rapidly becoming who they will one day be, and we can't help but continue to want the best for them.

When we think about what is best for our child, most of the time we think of what school they attend and what friends they spend their time with. These are valid, but their smile can dictate their future just as much if not more. Let's find out how!



# **TONGUE TIES**

Tongue ties can impact children of any age, not only infants, and can really impair your child's development. Tongue ties come in varying classifications from 1 (least restricted) to 4 (most restricted). Not all tongue ties in young kids need to be release but most do. Symptoms of tongue ties in young children can be snoring, being a picky eater, having chronic ear infections, or having a strong gag reflex.

Your dentist or orthodontist should check for a tongue tie and let you know what classification it is. They also will most likely have someone they recommend to release it for you or they might be able to do this themselves. Make sure you go to someone who specializes in tongue tie releases. Just because a medical professional knows how to do it, doesn't mean it will be done correctly. To find someone in your area who does tongue tie releases very well, reach out to several myofunctional therapists and ask who they would recommend. If they all recommend the same dentist, then you have found the person who is best in your area.

Also, sometimes when babies have had their tongue ties released, they can actually reattach. So even if you had your child's released, make sure to have it checked to make sure it was done correctly, completely, and that it did not reattach as they grow.

When younger kids have tongue ties released, they often need to work with a myofunctional therapist who will help them retrain their mouth and tongue muscles to be used correctly. Many myofuntional therapists now offer virtual visits so if there is no one in your area, start looking online.

# **MOUTH BREATHING**

Mouth breathing is a concern from infancy to adulthood! In addition to the symptoms addressed in Chapter 2, mouth breathing in young kids may also

be correlated with incontinence (or prolonged bed-wetting) at night, sleep walking, behavioral disturbances, or learning difficulties.

If your young child primarily mouth breaths, the first step is to get them checked out by an ENT or airway orthodontist. If you can find an ENT and airway orthodontist that work together, that is perfect. Ideally, you want the professional to do a CBCT scan (cone beam computed tomography scan) on them. This scan gives the most clear and detailed picture of what their breathing airways look like.

Two books we recommend on the importance of nasal breathing is Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art by James Nestor and Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic by Dr. Sandra Kahn. You will see us recommend both books numerous times in this guide simply because we believe they are two of the most important books you could read for your child's overall health and wellness.

Mouth taping is a good option for helping children learn to breathe through their nose but never do this before getting them checked by an ENT, and make sure to only do under the advisement of a trained medical professional that can ensure you are doing it safely and effectively with your child.

If there was one topic we could pick from this book that we believe is the most important to your child's health, it is this. The importance of nasal breathing is life changing for any child or adult. And developing this habit early on will help and prevent more issues than you can imagine such as cavities, decay, gum disease, bad breath, anxiety, attention issues, and so much more.

## **DIET**

Diet, as we all know, has a huge part to play in our kid's oral health and overall wellness. Yes, keep them away from large amounts of sugar, but there is so much more to it than that. Our society as a whole has moved away from how our ancestors prepared and ate food. Even those of us who



eat local, organic, healthy diets still don't eat close to how our ancestors ate. The food we eat is soft, heavily cooked and prepared. We don't have to chew it much. All of this is detrimental to our kid's jaw and face development. It leads to narrow palates and weak jaws which then don't easily stay shut and therefore leads to mouth breathing.

A wonderful book on the types of foods you child should be eating for healthy teeth is The Dental Diet by Dr. Steven Lin. A second great book on why the types of food your kids eat does really matter when it comes to avoiding braces, having a nice facial structure, and making room for wisdom teeth is Dr. Sandra Kahn's, Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic.

## **BRUSHING & FLOSSING**

At this age, brushing and flossing habits are still being learned. These children often have the ability to do these tasks, but they lack the willingness or care to complete it correctly. Be sure to educate them on why oral hygiene is important, and allow them to see your consistency in taking care of your mouth as well. Allow them to grow in their ability, but be willing to help as needed to ensure that both brushing and flossing are accomplished correctly.

They should be brushing into the gums with gentle, circular strokes for 2 minutes at a time, and flossing along the sides of each tooth. You can support your child's oral microbiome by adding minerals back into their enamel with the aid of a remineralizing tooth paste or powder. Encourage them to use a floss that is natural and unflavored if possible. You might need to use flossing tools or an electric toothbrush if these help make this more enjoyable. Remember to make this a fun task that they are willing to participate in, and not something that they dread!

## DENTISTS, ORTHODONTISTS & MORE

Ideally, a child should be seeing the dentist from the time their first tooth comes through but if that wasn't the case, that is okay. Just get them in as soon as possible! It is recommended for them to see the dentist 2-4 times per year for a checkup. This allows the dentist to catch any issues early on preventing larger problems from ever occurring.

We also recommend getting children as young as 5 year old into seeing an orthodontist. Children have drastic jaw growth around age 6-7 and if there are issues, orthodontists used to working on younger kids can make drastic progress with them simply using expanders during that massive growth time.

We highly recommend reading the book Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic before your kids turn 5-6 years old. There are so many preventable issues (wisdom teeth removal, crowded teeth, etc) that can be avoided with very simple interventions such as expanders. In the Resource section we go into details of how to find an orthodontist who has the knowledge and expertise to work on young children.

Myofunctional therapists are another professional to consider for your child. These professionals help your child learn to breath properly, maintain proper oral posture, swallow correctly, and so much more. All of these minor (but everyday) functions of our kid's bodies really affect their oral and overall health.

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C H A P T E R

## **TEENAGERS**

YOUR KID'S MOUTH MATTERS

# TEENS

Your child is growing into a young adult, and it feels like you've only begun this journey with them. Hormones and homework are rampant, but so is the joy that they can bring. Somehow now, more than ever, you desire for this teenager to have a solid foundation for the rest of their life. We concern ourselves over the hurts, habits, and hang-ups. We question if we could do more to help them in any way. We tend to be proactive with extracurricular activities and college applications. What if we were additionally proactive about their oral health?

What if their need for braces, fillings, or wisdom teeth removal told us a deeper story? Their facial structures and teeth are grown, but there is still so much we can do to help our teenagers thrive as they continue to grow into adults. In this chapter, we explore many of the ways we can set up our teenagers up for success!



## **TONGUE TIES**

In the teenage years, signs of oral dysfunction may look like a recessed jawline, snoring or sleep apnea, crooked and crowded teeth, cavities or gum disease. You can always have them assessed for tongue or oral restrictions. Even though releases in teens are less likely to have drastic changes like they do in infants and young kids (because the facial structure and jaw are already more developed), it is still very worth while to look into . We have known many adults to got ties released which drastically helped their overall health from neck tension to getting rid of headaches and allowing them to more easily nasal breath.

If you do decide to get your teen's tongue tie release, it is likely that therapy with a myofunctional therapist will be necessary.

## **MOUTH BREATHING**

Your teen should always have the ability to breathe exclusively through their nasal passageways. If you are noticing your teenager breathing through their mouth more than 25-50% of the time, you will want them examined by an ENT and ensure that their upper airway is unobstructed. Once this is cleared, consider working with a myofunctional therapist to retrain their muscles and habits to support nasal breathing.

Assuming there is no oral or maxillary dysfunction, mouth taping is a great tool to keep the mouth closed and promote nasal breathing. For this age group, start with mouth taping at rest during the day. You may want to incentivize them to participate, but this can be done while watching a movie or while doing homework. Once this can be completed comfortably during the day, transition to taping while they sleep. Again, if this cannot be done comfortably and breathing through the nose is not accessible and very easy when they are lying down, see an ENT for further examination.

# DIET

As our kid's grow into teens, they are starting to make a lot more decisions for themselves, including what they eat. By eating healthier, made-from-scratch meals at home, you are already providing them with a great foundation.

Several things your teens (and the entire family) can focus on to help create healthy, strong jaws & wider palettes is chewing more often. Try chewing 20-30 times before swallowing. Make it a fun game at the dinner table to see who can actually do that every single bite. You'll quickly learn that most of the family "inhales" their food instead of chewing it if they aren't fully concentrating on it.

One great motivator for teens is appearance. You can show them some before and after photos of teens who have "mewed." This is the term used for correct oral posture (tongue on the roof of their mouth) as well as consciously chewing their food before swallowing. What your teen will see is teens with defined jawlines, cheek bones, and generally more attractive faces.

A wonderful book on the types of foods your teen should be eating for healthy teeth is The Dental Diet by Dr. Steven Lin. A second great book on why the types of food your kids eat does really matter when it comes to avoiding braces, having a nice facial structure, and making room for wisdom teeth is Dr. Sandra Kahn's, Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic. This book is full of great before and after pictures of kids and teens who have actively practiced chewing their food and having proper oral posture.

# BRUSHING & FLOSSING

Hopefully at this time, brushing and flossing habits are well established. You may need to reinforce this occasionally, but your teenager may be well on their way to independently brushing their teeth at least twice a day and flossing once a day. They should be brushing into the gums with gentle, circular strokes and for 2 minutes at a time, and flossing along the sides of each tooth.

You can support your teenagers oral microbiome by adding minerals back into their enamel with the aid of a remineralizing tooth paste or powder. Encourage them to use a floss that is natural and unflavored if possible. Avoid synthetic ingredients or "natural flavors" as these can be endocrine disruptors and toxic to their growing bodies. Another great addition is an oral probiotic which they can take after they brush. Most are made to taste just like breath mints making it very easy to take daily.

## **DENTIST & OTHODONTIST**

It is recommended for your teen to see the dentist 2-4 times per year for a checkup. This allows the dentist to catch any issues early on preventing larger problems from ever occurring.

Getting orthodontic work done during teenage years is very normal. Although it is not hard to find an orthodontist who will work on a teenager, we highly recommend you reading the resource section of this book on finding a holistically minded orthodontist for your teen. Ideally it is best to work with younger kids when their jaws are drastically growing, much jaw structure work can be done with teens as well.

If your child has great jaw structure, it is likely that they can keep their wisdom teeth. If their palettes are narrow resulting in crowded teeth, it is likely that their wisdom teeth will need to be extracted. Pulling wisdom teeth can be avoided if many of the suggestions we have recommended are followed from infancy on. That said, many of us just didn't know any better until the maxilla and mandible are fixed. In this case, there is no room for wisdom teeth in a narrow palette and wisdom teeth extraction is the best choice to avoid overcrowding and impairing the bite and jaw alignment more.

The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons states that about 85% of third molars will eventually need to be removed. The association recommends extraction of all 4 third molars by young adulthood before the roots are fully formed. So even though is it not ideal for those wisdom teeth to come out, due to the nature of our society and how children are typically raised nowadays, it is often necessary.

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C H A P T E R

## **FINDING PROFESSIONALS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Y O U R M O U T H M A T T E R S



# FINDING A DENTIST

While this book is written to summarize a plethora of articles and data that has been conducted in recent decades, much of the findings are not quickly accepted by the dental and medical world as a whole. If you are seeking a dentist who is up-to-date with recent research in the topics listed here, you might need to search for holistic, functional, or biologic dentists in your general area.

You can search different professional organizations such as the American Academy for Oral Systemic Health (AAOSH), American Academy of Sleep Deep Medicine (AASDM), International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT), and Holistic Dental Association (HDA). One key we've found to be beneficial is to call and ask if an office has a CBCT machine. Many holistic dentists will have these in order to do scans on their patients who have root canals. If they have one, it shows that they are aware of and proactive in treating things that some conventional dentists do not.

Never underestimate the power of a personal reference too. Don't be scared to ask around for recommendations. You might also want to call other offices for some guidance as well. For instance, say you are searching for an airway orthodontists, but can't find one. Try calling the closest holistic dentist and ask them if they can refer you to the nearest orthodontist that they recommend.

Lastly, Dr. Mark Burhenne has a group resource to help your search in finding a likeminded dentist in your area at [www.askthedentist.com](http://www.askthedentist.com).

# FINDING AN ORTHODONTIST

Finding an orthodontist who is holistically minded can be challenging at times. We highly recommend reading the book, Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic, before finding an orthodontist. This will give you the knowledge needed when researching or calling orthodontists in your area. The author, Dr. Sandra Kahn, also does online consultations which is a great place to start. You can send her pictures of your kids and set up an online consultation.

Also, do not be afraid to drive. If there is a holistically minded orthodontist 4 hours away, it might be worth the time investment to drive the long distance versus going to a traditional orthodontist close by.

The ideal orthodontist would be called an "orthotropic orthodontist" or an "orthotropist." This means they are focused on facial growth guidance and not just on aesthetics. You can see if there is one near you by searching on the International Association of Facial Growth Guidance (IAFGG).

# FINDING A MYOFUNCTIONAL THERAPIST

The best way to find a myofunctional therapist is going off of the recommendation of your orthodontist or dentist. Be sure to spend a good amount of time researching to find a dentist or orthodontist that works for you, and most likely they will already have a myofunctional therapist that they recommend.

Many myofunctional therapists are now doing online consultations so finding one nearby to you isn't always necessary anymore.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We have compiled a list of resources for you in case you are interested in diving a little deeper into any of the topics I've discussed. The world of oral wellness is fascinating, and we hope this helps you on your own personal journey!

## Books

Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art by James Nestor

Cavity Free Families eBook by Dr. Molly Hayes

Cure Tooth Decay by Ramiel Nagel

The Dental Diet by Dr. Steven Lin

Heal Your Oral Microbiome by Cass Nelson-Dooley

Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic by Dr. Sandra Kahn

Your Mouth Matters eBook by Lauren Dahl

## Websites

Dr. Mark Burhenne: [www.askthedentist.com](http://www.askthedentist.com)

Weston A Price Foundation: [www.westonaprice.org](http://www.westonaprice.org)

Wonder's Blog: [www.wonderoralwellness.com](http://www.wonderoralwellness.com)

## **Products**

Bristle: [www.bristleheath.com](http://www.bristleheath.com)

- Oral microbiome test kit great for finding out the root cause of chronic dental issues and decay

GumChucks: [www.gumchucks.com](http://www.gumchucks.com)

- Fun, simple way to floss young kid's teeth

Super Teeth: [www.getsuperteeth.com](http://www.getsuperteeth.com)

- Oral probiotic safe for kids and adults

Wonder Oral Wellness: [www.wonderoralwellness.com](http://www.wonderoralwellness.com)

- Natural Tooth Powders
- Silk Floss
- Tongue Cleaners
- Oral pH Strips
- Mouth Tape
- Books & Resources

## **Social Media Accounts to Follow**

Dr. Leedia Riman: IG @drleedia

Dr. Mandeep Johal: IG @drmandeepjohal

Dr. Mark Burhenne: IG @askthedentist

Dr. Molly Hayes: IG @drmollyhayes

Dr. Staci Whitman: IG @doctor\_staci

Dr. Steven Lin: IG @drstevenlin

Jacqueline, RDH: IG @the.flossophy

James Nestor: IG @mrjamesnestor

Timbrey Lind: IG @timbrey\_lind

The Tongue Therapist: IG @thetonguetherapist

Weston Price Foundation: IG @westonaprice