Age-7 orthodontic check card

What to bring, what parents often notice at home, and what to ask at your child's first orthodontic visit.

1 What you may have noticed

None of these means treatment is needed. All of them are worth mentioning.

- ☐ Baby teeth lost very early or very late
- ☐ Front teeth that stick out, or that do not meet
- ☐ A bite that shifts to one side when my child closes
- ☐ A jaw that clicks or hurts
- ☐ A thumb or pacifier habit (how long: _____)
- ☐ An injury to a front tooth
- ☐ A parent or sibling who needed orthodontic treatment (most bite problems are inherited)

2 Bring with you

- ☐ Your child's dental history, and the name of your family dentist
- ☐ Any X-rays or photos your dentist has taken recently
- ☐ Insurance details, if you have a plan
- ☐ This card and your questions

3 Questions to ask

- ☐ What do you see today?
- ☐ Does anything need to be done now?
- ☐ What will you be watching for, and when should we come back?
- ☐ What would make you start earlier?
- ☐ If we wait, what changes?

4 What the research says

PROBLEM	EARLY TREATMENT
Upper front teeth stick out	Fewer injuries to front teeth (19 per cent against 30 per cent). Final bite similar to treating once in the teens.
Underbite	Works at first. Improvement faded by six years in the one long-term trial. May lower the later need for jaw surgery (low certainty).
Crossbite with a jaw shift	Often corrected early. Trials mostly compare one expander with another.
Crowding alone	Usually watched until more permanent teeth arrive.

Sources: Cochrane reviews of Class II (2018) and Class III (2024) treatment in children, and the Canadian Association of Orthodontists, which recommends a visit no later than age 7.

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