



Miami Designer Smiles

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The Big 3



When your child visits our practice, we're not just looking at their teeth! While of course their oral and dental health is a concern, there are other things we take into consideration when we take a look into their mouths. These things are frequently missed and are critical to your child's dental development and proper facial growth.

Think of us as dental detectives. We take a look at your child's mouth, teeth, bite and airway for clues as to whether there's a problem in development — and then we determine what we need to do to solve it. We are looking for three things, in particular, often referred to as "The Big Three." These things can help us identify any abnormal growth patterns in your child's jaw and midface development and change the growth trajectory if there is indeed a problem.

THE BIG THREE

#1 Mouth Breathing

Did you know that how we breathe has everything to do with how our mouths develop? It's true! How your child breathes offers a big clue as to what is going on with their facial development, oral and dental health, and dental development.

One common breathing problem we see is mouth breathing. If your child is not breathing through their nose regularly and is instead breathing through their mouth, the tongue rests on the bottom of the mouth instead of the roof of the mouth. This incorrect position of the tongue can impair the growth of the upper jaw. Also, if your child is not breathing through their nose, the air pressure when they breathe in is significantly different from the air pressure going out, which can negatively affect facial skeletal development. Finally, chronic mouth breathing can contribute to enlarged adenoids and nasal turbinates, causing airway obstruction.

Nasal breathing offers some significant benefits, including more oxygen getting into the body; filtration of environmental pollutants, pollen and germs; and humidification of the air we breathe. The mouth, which is designed for eating, does not filter or humidify the air.

#2 Tongue Placement

As we just mentioned, if your child's tongue is not against the roof of their mouth, it can negatively affect facial development, breathing and swallowing, and impair the development of their upper and lower jaws and teeth. Facial development is a combination of our genetic programming, plus the impact of the environment on our development. Tongue position can also affect your child's bite, further affecting jaw development and oral health.

#3 Lip Seal

Your child's lips should touch when your child is swallowing food or at rest. If their lips are apart during these times, the tongue forms the seal at the front of the mouth. Also, if the lower lip is caught under the upper teeth, this force, over time, can cause the upper teeth to be pushed forward and the lower teeth to be pushed back. Lips that do not touch and incorrect tongue placement can also cause the jaws to be pushed into an unnatural position, negatively affecting the jaw development and joints over time.

Can you check off these three boxes for your child?

If not, we recommend calling Miami Designer Smiles at (786) 730-5999 for an exam and a consultation to identify the cause and find the right treatment for your child.

Remember, as with many things, early intervention is best and can allow normal facial growth to resume as quickly as possible.