

thumb finger sucking and nail biting



The clinical experts at Octagon Orthodontics give patients and parents advice about the dangers of thumb or finger sucking and support patients throughout their orthodontic journey to enable them to achieve the best smile possible!

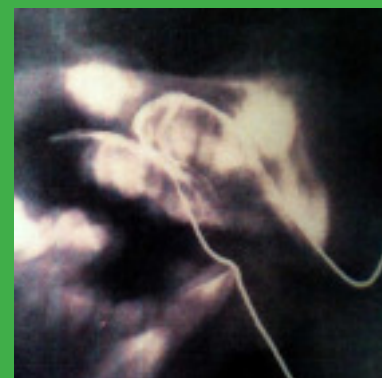
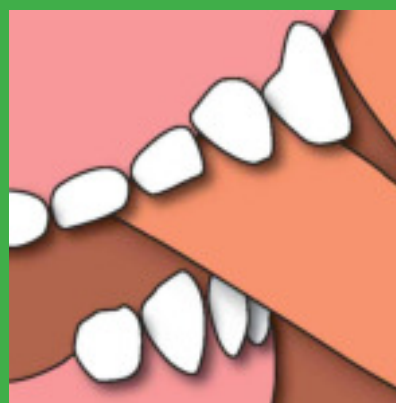
Digit sucking pushes the teeth into abnormal positions and distorts the growth of the jaws and interferes with the correct development of the bite. A more sinister risk is root resorption, where the root of the tooth slowly dissolves away.

It is important for all patients to stop all habits completely prior to the commencement of orthodontic treatment in order to prevent root resorption. You can not have braces if you have one of these habits!

The diagram and radiograph are examples of thumb sucking, although there might be variations to this pattern. The patient usually presses the thumb onto the roof of the upper jaw (the palate) and also onto the back surface of the upper front teeth (the upper incisors). Contact is also made with the lower incisors.

The effect of this thumb sucking action is to push the upper jaw and teeth forward, causing an increase in the overjet (Class II malocclusion). Contact with the lower teeth

causes them to be pushed inwards and sometimes backwards, which results in an anterior open bite (the upper and lower incisors are separated and you can see clear daylight between the teeth when the patient bites).



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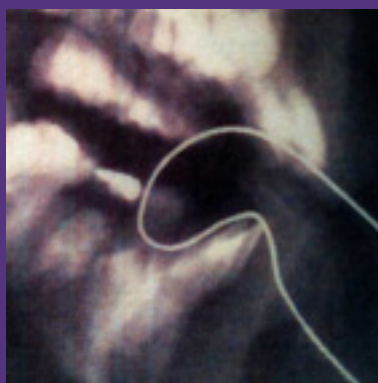
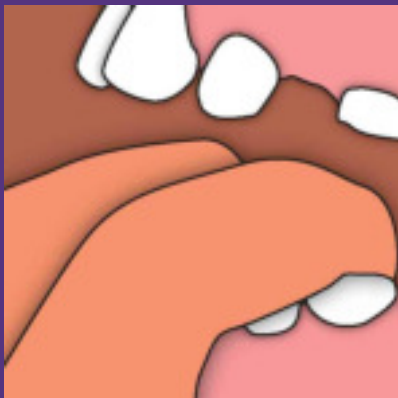
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The illustrations below show classic finger sucking but variations of this might happen. Because the fingers press against the front of the lower jaw and the lower front teeth, they disrupt the bite. The upper and lower teeth are pushed outwards towards the lips and an anterior open bite and increased overjet are also seen.



HOW TO STOP

You must use both methods simultaneously to have any success!!!

- Use a conscious reminder during the day e.g stop and grow varnish or anti nail biting varnish applied to the fingers and thumbs several times a day
- Employ an obstructive technique at night time e.g mittens or socks over both hands to prevent subconscious insertion of the fingers or thumbs into the mouth
- These two methods should be used for at least 3 months after the habit has stopped to prevent relapse
- If all else fails, book your child in to see our Orthodontic Specialists

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