

OMT! These exercises can improve your child's bite

By KIM GLOVER, R.D.H.

Have you heard that your child's appearance can be affected by how she swallows and how she breathes? For example, a person who pushes the tip of her tongue against the backsides of her front teeth while swallowing may eventually push those teeth forward into a "buck toothed" position. This is called a tongue thrust. A buck toothed look is especially likely to happen if your child is a mouth breather who does not "seal" her lips together while breathing and swallowing.

A more "correct" place to hold the tongue while swallowing is on the roof of the mouth, just behind the front teeth. This prevents the tongue from pushing against the

front teeth and moving those teeth forward over time. The goal is to have sides of the tongue exert pressure along the upper premolars and molars while swallowing. This encourages the mouth to grow wider, making more room for teeth and a nice, wide smile.

Orofacial myofunctional therapy (OMT) represents a growing field of specialists who help identify and retrain how a person – young or old – swallows and breathes in order to improve their bite, appearance, and even how well they sleep. Just think of this as physical therapy for the mouth. Crowded teeth, "buck teeth," open bites, and mouth breathing are some of the conditions can be improved with OMT. It may even reduce or

eliminate the need for orthodontic treatment, such as braces.

Sarah Hornsby is an orofacial myofunctional therapist and dental hygienist in Seattle. She uses Skype to provide personalized therapy sessions for her clients from all over the world. Sarah notes that it is not normal or healthy for people



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important to identify and treat the cause, then help her relearn how to breathe primarily through her nose. Amazingly, this will help her mouth

grow wider, with more room for her teeth.

OMT exercises are easy to learn. As OMT patients master each set of exercises, they will "graduate" to new exercises. The exercises are simple to do, and can be tailored to any age from toddlers to adults.

To better understand proper breathing and swallowing, Sarah has some excellent videos on her YouTube channel. Just enter her name in the YouTube search and you will find several videos to help you understand proper swallowing, nasal breathing, and



to breathe through their mouths. She states that an estimated 40 percent of children have some type of allergy, which can lead to mouth breathing. In addition to allergies, a child may breathe through her mouth because of enlarged tonsils or adenoids. If a child has made a habit of mouth breathing, it is

how OMT can help you or your child. You can learn more at www.myfaceology.com

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