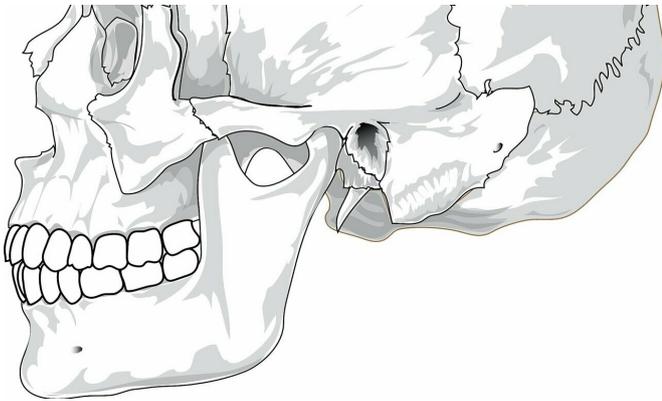


# Protect protruding teeth from damage and long-term consequences

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Children with their first or early adult set of teeth that stick out have an increased chance of damaging them, but the risk can be easily reduced without being prohibitively costly.

A study undertaken at the University of Adelaide of more than 50,000 children aged under 19 years published in the journal *Dental Traumatology*, confirms a direct link between the degree to which a young patient's [teeth](#) protrude and the chance of damaging them.

"Traumatic dental injuries have been identified as the fifth most prevalent disease or injury globally and their subsequent management is costly," says Dr. Esmat Dogramaci, Senior Lecturer in Orthodontics, the University of Adelaide.

"While the number of traumatic dental injuries have fallen over recent decades, they have significant physical, psychological and economic consequences.

"Young children up to the age of six years with teeth that stick out more than 3mm have over three times higher chance of trauma than children

without protruding teeth. Children over six years with teeth that protrude more than 5mm have over double the chance of trauma," says Dr. Dogramaci.

Corrective orthodontic treatment of children's teeth isn't usually undertaken until all permanent adult teeth have come through—usually after the age of 12 years. However, an expensive visit to an orthodontist isn't essential to protect teeth that stick out.

"A dentist can easily measure how far a child's teeth stick out and recommend whether they should be fitted with a brace. They can apply simple braces which can reduce the prominence of protruding teeth and significantly reduce the chance of them being damaged," says Dr. Dogramaci.

If children suck their thumb this may also cause the teeth to stick out so they should be discouraged from this habit as early as possible. Children should also wear a mouth guard to protect protruding teeth when playing sports.

"Early identification and protection of protruding teeth through regular dental check-ups reduces the chance of early problems becoming long-term dental issues," says Dr. Dogramaci.

"If young teeth are broken or knocked out long-term issues may occur like the need for root canal treatment or even tooth loss, requiring a lifetime commitment for general dental treatment.

"Also, if orthodontic [treatment](#) is carried out on teeth that have previously suffered from trauma, further complications can occur during orthodontics that could lead to the loss of those teeth.

"The results of this study confirm that regular check-ups, particularly for [children](#), are a must for good long-term dental health."

**More information:** George P Arraj et al. The

association of overjet size and traumatic dental injuries – a systematic review and meta-analysis, *Dental Traumatology* (2019). DOI: [10.1111/edt.12481](https://doi.org/10.1111/edt.12481)

Provided by University of Adelaide

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