

Ages 6-12

Ducklings to Swans

As children lose those perfectly white, straight baby teeth, it can be a shock to see what follows: huge “chicklet” teeth which often aren’t pretty and look way too large. To make matters worse, sometimes they come in sideways, twisted or even behind or in front of baby teeth that somehow didn’t fall out. Some kids lose teeth earlier or later than others, and girls tend to lose baby teeth earlier and get permanent teeth faster than boys of the same age. It can be exasperating for parents to figure out if there is a problem, what teeth need to come out and wondering if their budgets need to stretch for orthodontics.

The good news is this is normal! During this time of transition, kids have a tremendous amount of growth still ahead of them, including their face and jaws. Most times they will grow into those teeth and all will be fine. Sometimes your dentist will have to help with those stubborn baby teeth that refuse to come out to let those new permanent teeth have some space to come in. And, yes, sometimes a visit to the orthodontist is needed to keep an eye on the jaw growth to make sure there is room for all the teeth.

Keeping a diligent eye on brushing habits is important during this transitional time as well. Newly erupted permanent teeth are softer than teeth already in the mouth and need protection from acid-causing bacteria until they too can get harder. Good nutrition is always important to help teeth grow and prevent tooth decay. If primary or baby teeth are lost prematurely due to trauma, decay or other issues, a space maintainer may

be used as a placeholder for the permanent tooth until it can erupt on its own.

Typical eruption pattern of 32 permanent teeth, 16 on top, 16 on the bottom:

First permanent molars.....	age 5-7 years
Lower central incisors	age 6-7 years
Upper central incisors.....	age 7-8 years
Upper and lower lateral incisors.....	7-9 years
Upper and lower canines.....	9-11 years
Upper and lower first premolars.....	10-12 years
Upper and lower second premolars.....	11-12 years
Upper and lower second molars.....	11-13 years
Upper & lower third molars (wisdom teeth)...	17-21 years

Tooth eruption patterns tend to run in families, so if your teeth were late, your children’s may be as well. Children get very frustrated when classmates are losing their teeth and they are not. Some reassurance by the parents that the teeth will come out when they are ready is helpful.

It helps to know those big teeth are a normal phase, and those sweet ducklings will soon become beautiful swans with just-right sized teeth to last a lifetime.

www.simplyteeth.com

<http://adha.org/kidstuff/index.html>

http://ada.org/public/topics/tooth_eruption.asp

www.SuperiorDental.com