

OVERCOMING UNDERBITES

BY DR. ELI GHERMAN

Purim is in the air and what a better topic to discuss than “v’nahafochu” or, in orthodontic parlance, “reverse bites”.

“Reverse” or “Under-bites” can and should be treated early on. The under-bite is corrected, the better chance we have for normalized growth in your child.

THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF SKELETAL PATTERNS:

Class I: Both jaws are growing in unison.

Class II: The upper jaw is outgrowing the lower jaw and/or the lower jaw is lagging behind the upper jaw. This results in an abnormal over-jet or what is generally known as buckteeth.

Class III: The lower jaw is outgrowing the upper jaw and/or the upper jaw is lagging behind the lower jaw. This results in a front cross-bite or under-bite. Very often, when the upper jaw is not long enough, it is also not wide enough, which leads to a cross-bite on the back teeth, in addition to the under-bite.

There are generally three treatment tools we use to correct under-bites:

- 1. The Expander: This widens the upper jaw and stimulates it to grow forward.

- 2. Reverse pull headgear: This is worn at home and also helps the upper jaw to grow forward.
- 3. Temporary braces: These braces help to straighten and tilt the teeth forward giving them the final push they need to “jump” the under-bite. They are called temporary because they are used for only 6-8 months early in the treatment.

Correcting an under-bite at an early age, does not guarantee that your child will not need full braces later on, but it will have the following benefits:

- Help create a more balanced growth pattern
- Allow for better chewing and digestion
- Build self-esteem
- Prevent serious wear on your child’s permanent teeth
- Help to prevent your child’s bite from becoming so unbalanced that only surgery can correct the problem

If you suspect your child has or is developing an under-bite, it is important to consult with an orthodontist as soon as possible.



BEFORE:



AFTER

Patient NM:

Using early treatment and the above discussed tools his treatment took one year and he only needed minor orthodontic treatment for his second stage of braces (phase 2).

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