



THE DEEP BITE

BY DR. ELI GHERMAN

It happens all the time: Ten year old Moishe comes into the office for his exam. Mom and Dad look at his smile and nervously say aren't they so nice and straight?

I want to say yes! His teeth are straighter than the cedars of Lebanon and he is beaming with a healthy smile.....but, I can't. Moishe has a deep over-bite, one of the more traumatic bites that will not correct itself but will progressively wear his teeth away, causing a myriad of problems.

There are not many things as difficult for an orthodontist than to deflate the hopes of new patients who come in thinking everything is perfect.

So let's start from the beginning: Hashem created the human's teeth with the utmost perfection. The ideal bite (see picture) is when the upper teeth overlap the lower teeth by 1 to 2 mm. Hashem gave us both choppers (the front teeth) and grinders (the back teeth). In order to chop the food into smaller pieces the upper and lower front teeth must come together, somewhat like a scissor which could not cut if the blades were not close to each other. In an ideal bite, that movement of bringing our teeth together to chop is very gentle, especially because the muscles of the face are being stretched only slightly, with enough force to chop the food but not harm the teeth; however, in a deep bite there is trauma as the teeth have a far way to travel to meet each other, the muscles are stretched significantly and then slam the teeth together with too much force.. Once worn, lost tooth structure will never grow back! I have seen adults, as well as young teens, who are missing nearly half of their front teeth. The deep bite can lead to:

1. Worn-down teeth that are sensitive, develop cavities faster and even may need root canal treatment!
2. Sores or ulcers that develop on the roof of your mouth.
3. Crooked or cramped teeth that can't be corrected until the deep bite is treated.

THE GOOD NEWS: An overbite can be treated at any age.



A normal bite



A deep bite



An overbite that has done its damage

However, it is easier to treat in younger children because their mouths are still developing. The American Dental Association recommends beginning treatment as early as eight years old. Early treatment is beneficial because it can prevent or minimize further complications such as: speech impediments, problems eating, pain within the jaw and gums worn tooth enamel, increased risk of cavities and gum disease, teeth grinding and lowered self-esteem.

Often, treatment starts with a bite plate (looks like a retainer) that:

1. Immediately guards the teeth
2. Starts to relieve the deep bite

3. Trains the muscles to be in the more open position: This allows the braces to work faster and helps to maintain the healthy smile the orthodontist is working to achieve.

It can also be fun for kids and adults as they design their own unique bite plates.

There are rainbows, tie-dyed, soccer balls and more!

I must end with this memorable story: I once visited a lab in Massachusetts, where they made some really beautiful bite plates with any design you could

imagine. One technician called me over and said, "I see you are wearing a yarmulke. Are you Jewish? Can you tell me what are all these symbols that this doctor puts on all his retainers?"

"Sure," I said, "It says 'אני לא מדבר לשון הרע'"

"And what in the world is that?" she asked.

I explained to her that the Jewish people are commanded to watch what they say and not talk badly, so I guess this reminds them.

"Wow!" she exclaimed, "You are a special people!"

Dr. Eliyahu Gherman's main office is located in Ramat Bet Shemesh-A, Nachal Tamar 1 (02-992-3363, simchabraces@gmail.com). He also works in Rechavia (02-561-9780). We are always looking for the most comfortable, fastest and ideal way to give you a healthy and beautiful smile.



My favorite design



We give you some ideas, but you design a unique bite plate that you'll be proud to wear