

SPEECH PATHOLOGY SERVICES

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HOW CAN TONGUE POWER CAUSE PROBLEMS?

YOUR TONGUE is important for tasting, chewing, swallowing and speaking. However, if your tongue constantly pushes against your teeth during these natural actions, problems can occur.

YOUR TEETH can move out of their natural alignment, due to constant pressure of your tongue against or between them.

ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT can be prolonged by tongue thrusting. As the braces try to straighten the teeth, your powerful tongue muscles continue to push forward, prolonging the effectiveness of the braces. When the braces are removed, your tongue can push the teeth out of alignment again.

SPEECH DISORDERS often occur as the result of tongue thrusting. Incorrect tongue placement can distort speech sounds, such as saying

WHAT IS TONGUE THRUST?

TONGUE THRUSTING is normal for early feeding. Babies thrust their tongues forward for easy, efficient nursing. As the child's mouth muscles mature, this infantile swallowing pattern is gradually replaced by a more efficient tongue movement. Children who do not make this transition may adopt a pervasive tongue thrusting habit while swallowing, speaking and relaxing.

DENTAL PROBLEMS caused by tongue thrusting are identified by your orthodontist or dentist, who will recommend the correct treatment or referral for you.

TONGUE THRUST SYMPTOMS include:

- Tongue visible when eating
- Washing down food with liquids
- Tongue resting against teeth
- Open mouth breathing

HOW CAN YOU LEARN TO CONTROL YOUR TONGUE?

- Finger, thumb, tongue sucking

TONGUE CONTROL is possible with effective therapy and daily practice. Your orthodontist or dentist will determine if an evaluation by an ASHA Certified Speech-Language-Pathologist is indicated.

INTERVENTION involves a brief period of structured sessions to teach tongue control while swallowing, speaking and relaxing. The mature swallow is quickly learned through supplemental practice.

CHILDREN 5 to 7 years old with strong tongue thrusting, dental and/or speech problems often experience correct alignment during therapy. Children older than 7 years with habitual swallow patterns also benefit from therapy.

YOUTH AND ADULTS usually benefit from combined orthodontic and tongue thrust therapy.

YOUR ORTHODONTIST OR DENTIST will recommend the