



# Why Children **MUST** Chew

The essential Oral Milestones in a child's  
healthy growth and development

**MYO MUNCHEE**  
SMALL DEVICE **BIG** IMPACT



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Oral Milestones  
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## Is your child at risk of oral underdevelopment?

If your child is over 2 years old and experiences any of the following, it might be worth looking further into their Oral Development and Function:

- Constant thumb sucking or dummy use (beyond 6 months)
- Mouth breathing
- Dribbling
- Recurrent ear infections
- Speech problems
- Fussy eating



## Didn't realise that any of the above were anything to be concerned about?

You're not alone! Mouth breathing or thumb sucking can look cute and dribbling is just a sign of teething right? Well sometimes... but not always.

We are seeing an increased use of dummies, including in frequency and number of years they are being offered. The combination of soft foods and dummy overuse is leading to underdevelopment of the jaw muscles and bones in many children. As a consequence, low tone of the muscles can mean that the lips have trouble staying together and mouth breathing patterns can develop.

Children who mouth breathe are much more likely to have problems with dribbling, difficulties eating harder or more dense foods and may also have issues with some speech sounds. These children are also more likely to snore and have sleep disturbance. This can all occur when there is less than optimal muscle tone.

Additionally, ear and sinus drainage relies on correct muscular patterns for swallowing and children who have been using dummies will often have reverse swallow patterns (also known as immature swallow pattern and is age appropriate till about 6 months). Consequently, dribbling and an inability to manage saliva may be a sign that there is an underlying issue that needs attention.

In fact, in the longer term, some of the aforementioned issues can be a sign that your child is not hitting their oral milestones!

# Oral Milestones?

## I've never heard of them!

If you're a parent, there's no doubt you're aware of the physical milestones your child should be meeting as they grow and develop: sitting, crawling, walking. You probably know when they are due for their next neurological leap. And you're likely even painfully aware of their sleep milestones and all the theories surrounding that particular area of healthy development.



However, you may not be aware that there are Oral Milestones your child should be meeting as well! In fact, oral development is often overlooked, despite its increasing importance for our children's healthy growth and development - well beyond the mouth!

## So, what are they?

1. **Sucking** is the first essential movement that grows the jaw. The action of breastfeeding is nature's way of stimulating, activating and co-ordinating all the muscles of the lower third of the face - a very important region of our bodies for overall healthy development.
2. **Chewing** is the next milestone that needs to be activated and this will be ready for stimulation by around 4-5 months (chew toys are perfect for this age group before solids start at 6 months).
3. **Mature Swallow Pattern:** This should be in place by 9-12 months and ensures that all food/drinks and saliva are able to be managed and not pushed forward. The forward movement of the tongue, commonly known as the 'extrusion reflex' should disappear by 10 months allowing for the mature swallowing pattern to occur.
4. **Drinking from a Cup** with some spillage is what should be expected by age 12 months. Weaning from bottles is best to take place by 12-15 months and children should begin drinking from recessed lid cups, open cups or straw cups.
5. **Eruption of Teeth:** Teething should occur in a particular order from around 6 months (some children are slightly slower).
6. **Chewing with Lips Closed:** By age 2 years the jaw, lips, cheeks and tongue move independently of each other and the child should be able to manage most foods in bite-sized pieces and can chew with lips closed!

These might seem fairly self-explanatory, but there are a lot of factors influencing your child's oral growth - you might not even be aware they are at risk of under-development!

When left untreated, some of the aforementioned signs of oral underdevelopment can lead to much larger issues. Such as:

## Sleep disturbance and behavioural problems.

A child should wake up in the morning happy and full of energy. If they're not it's a sign that they might not be getting enough deep restful sleep, which can occur if they are mouth breathing during sleep.

Nasal breathing during sleep is super important for good oxygenation of the brain. Without good sleep, children can be tired and low in energy but also exhibit signs of ADHD.

Relationships have also been reported between mouth breathing and disorders such as abnormal development of the orofacial region, dry mouth, malocclusion and chewing abnormalities, tooth cavities, periodontal disease, bad breath, sinus congestion and ear issues.

Never underestimate the power of nose breathing!



## Childhood Dental decay and recurrent ear infections

Habits like sucking a dummy or prolonged bottle feeding can create a swallow pattern different to the way a child would usually swallow.

Swallowing in this less efficient way means the muscles around the face and even under the neck, have to work harder. This can mean the muscles that are essential for opening the ear

tubes (Eustachian tubes) don't work well and can't drain efficiently, leading to recurrent ear infections.

Additionally, reduced chewing affects the production of saliva which is a key preventative of plaque and oral microbia in general, leading to cavities and decay. Saliva is nature's way of cleaning the oral cavity and chewing is responsible for activating the saliva production.



## Future Orthodontic procedures

It is now estimated that 80% of kids have imperfect bites, or more correctly: malocclusion.

Malocclusion doesn't just mean crooked teeth but the way the whole mouth and jaw fits together.

Good occlusion helps the jaw, and therefore teeth, develop well. This growth is also influenced by a number of factors including breathing, chewing, sucking and swallowing, as well as nutrition, diet and sucking habits.

Achieving optimal oral function and posture is a delicate balance of these forces.



## Why is my child experiencing these Oral difficulties?



# THEY MUST CHEW!



# We simply don't chew enough!

Over time, chewing has been outsourced to the point where we don't chew enough to fully activate the functions required to develop an ideal oral posture.

Simply put: Food is softer, more processed, and requires less effort for parents who are very busy and children who are eating on the go. Squeeze packs and "easy to get in quick food" is a way of life. So much so, children of today are not expected to ever develop wisdom teeth; we have evolved to no longer need them! but we shouldn't have....

Throughout history, chewing motions activated healthy biological development, growth, rest and resilience.

Therefore, our modern lifestyles of soft foods, reduced nutritional diversity and lack of exercise have removed many natural cues for healthy development.

The muscles of the lips, tongue and jaw haven't escaped the decline!

The natural growth generated from correct chewing makes a big contribution to overall development.

Chewing has been linked to facial development, correct swallow, normal digestion and even concentration and memory!

**So how can I help my child meet their  
Oral Milestones?**

**GET THEM CHEWING!**

**Daily chewing assists growth and development of the jaw,  
mouth and face with benefits that last for life!**

## CHEWING AND JAW GROWTH - IT'S LIKE ASSEMBLING A TENT!

Imagine the face and jaw as a tent. The tent with its tent poles is useless without the guy ropes as they provide the tension to hold the shelter straight and strong. The guy ropes of your face are the muscles. In particular, the muscles of the lips, face and tongue.

If we have the right tension in these muscles the forces acting on our face tend to be more balanced. In the growing face especially, these forces contribute to bone growth via the pull of the muscles on the bone.

This is a great system, provided the tensions on the ropes are correct. In muscle terms we call this "length tension relationships". In the face, things such as pacifier use, thumb sucking, open mouth breathing and nasal obstruction can alter the length tension on these muscles. This can result in incorrect growth forces.

A great example of this is the way a thumb sucker may have their teeth not meeting in the middle (open bite) because the force of the muscles pulling back over the thumb has literally shaped the way the teeth have positioned themselves.



## So what does all this have to do with chewing?



Well, chewing is something we should be doing quite a lot of everyday as the muscle activation required places a lot of force through the face, jaw and skull to either grow the bone or to keep it there and prevent bone loss. If you're not chewing correctly due to muscle length tension problems, you're likely not dispersing these strong forces as you should.

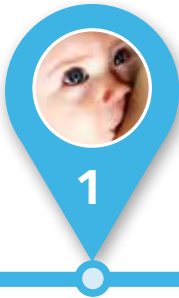
So lip seal while chewing, slow and deliberate chewing and a correct tongue swallow are paramount to "a good quality face".

## THE BENEFITS OF CHEWING

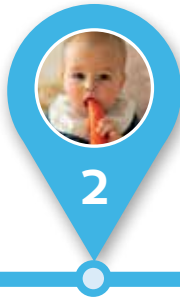
- ✓ The chewing action helps restore balance to the bones, muscles and joints that form the developing jaw.
- ✓ Knowing the benefits of chewing early and integrating that with other therapies can save big on later treatments.
- ✓ Chewing and mouthing will stimulate the gums and can ease and encourage the process of teething.
- ✓ Improved and more restful sleep
- ✓ Higher levels of energy and alertness
- ✓ Blood flow, sinus drainage and gum oxygenation
- ✓ Social and relational capacity
- ✓ Kick starts digestion and salivary glands
- ✓ Postural improvements

**Without further ado, let's chew!**

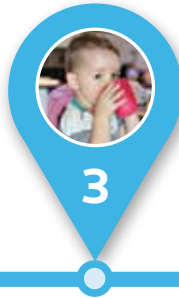
# HELP YOUR CHILDREN ACHIEVE THEIR ESSENTIAL ORAL MILESTONES



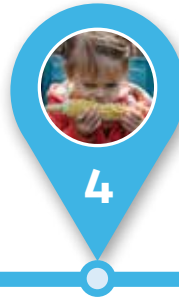
Encourage breastfeeding to activate proper sucking action. The action of breastfeeding is nature's way of stimulating, activating and co-ordinating all the muscles of the lower third of the face.



Baby will be ready to practice chewing by around 4-5 months. Chew toys are perfect for this age group to begin stimulation before solids start at 6 months.



Help your child drink from a cup by age 12 months. Weaning from bottles is best to take place by 12-15 months and children should begin drinking from recessed lid cups, open cups or straw cups. Another workout for the mouth!

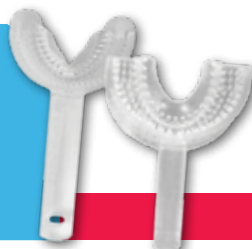


Steer clear of relying only on mashed and easy squeeze packet foods. Provide foods that require the jaw to work (CHEW!) in order to ensure your child is activating all the muscles required to achieve their oral milestones.

We are always working towards having children chewing real wholefood to get their jaws to develop but the Munchee is a great way to ensure they get enough chewing every single day, easily and conveniently. The Munchee is an ideal training tool as it places the jaw into a great resting position, the lips are closed around the device and the muscles and the bones attached to them undergo a great workout. Just 10 minutes of chewing a Munchee every day is a way for us to bring chewing back, enabling this generation of children to re-establish chewing as a foundational/essential movement for human development - a Milestone.

## Consider a Munchee for your Child

Daily chewing assists growth and development of the jaw, mouth and face – with benefits that last for life. You can see our range here.



[View ourRange](#)

**Don't take our word for it - hear from some Munchee Parents**

“She was so happy to swap her dummy for a Munchee”

- Mia's Mum, Munchee Parent



“The Munchee is great - my kids use it when they are on their screens - helps their breathing and body posture”

- Lauren Guzman, Myofunctional Therapist and Munchee Parent



“We've noticed a big difference, a big change, we're so happy with the Munchee and couldn't believe how fast it worked.”

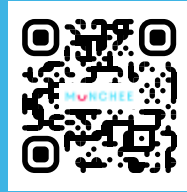
- Louis' mum, Munchee Parent



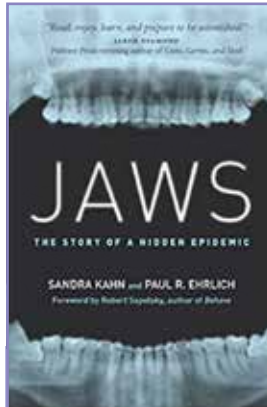
# Why not do some more reading about why children must chew!

## READ MORE:

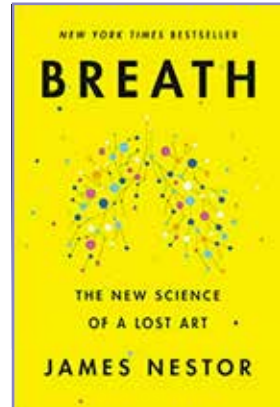
Chewing has been outsourced and the proof is in our evolution - Wisdom teeth vanish in a new stage of evolution



A word from  
Doctor Staci Whitman



JAWS - The story of  
a Hidden Epidemic



BREATH - a New  
Science of a Lost Art



## Join our free Facebook Group : Meeting your Oral Milestones: The Munchee Movement

We're all about empowering people for better health. What if we connected the dots around chewing, breathing, sleeping, and health? What if we found a simpler, and more natural way to reduce preventable health problems? And what if that way brought together kids, adults, and clinicians to engage and collaborate around health?

**That's the Munchee Movement—we hope you'll join us in our free Facebook Group.** We share lots of essential information, answer your questions and run educational webinars with leading experts.

**JOIN THE GROUP NOW**



**NOTE: The most important part of using a  
Munchee = COMMITMENT AND CONSISTENCY!**

That's right, all myofunctional appliances and therapy require these two key components and the Myo Munchee is no different. You need to be chewing daily as prescribed – just like brushing or flossing!

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[www.myomunchee.com](http://www.myomunchee.com)