

BEAUTIFUL FACES

Today's society shines brighter on beautiful people. Look at the advertisements on television and in magazines and you will quickly see to what I am referring. Everyone looks fabulous. In fact, a current magazine article shows Christie Brinkley turning age 55 and she looks like she did 30 years ago! Studies have shown that the more attractive the face, the more successful you are in your personal and professional life. These studies also show that they are rewarded with better salaries, more credibility, more rapid advances in their jobs and better accepted into other cultures. Today we are spending over 75 billion dollars annually on products and services that affect our looks.

There are multiple factors that affect the growth and development of our faces. These include environmental conditions, nutrition, exercise, habits as well as family history. However, a recent study indicates that an open airway may have the responsibility on the development of the face. Research has shown that the airway may be at the center of development of your face. Anything that develops, develops around the airway, thus, making the airway the hub of development. Airway obstruction can be likened to an obstruction that alters the flow of air through the nose and in and out of the lungs. This obstruction may be from tumors, large tonsils, adenoids, and a narrow palate.

If you think about the obstruction factors, you realize that all but tumors are frequently found in young children. In fact, in the first nine years of a child's life this development is happening. Today early dental examination of children is highly recommended. The most rapid changes in a child's face occur during the first three years of his/her life. As children become more active, more airflow and food are required. The nose and mouth begin to grow to accommodate the child's requirements. By age three the child's torso is fifty percent of the body mass with his/her head representing twenty-five percent. During the ages from three to nine there is an accelerated growth in his/her face. This growth period represents the best opportunity for us to intervene with interceptive therapies designed to alleviate any problems that might affect normal facial development. During these five years, most parents become aware of the signs and symptoms of developmental problems. Children begin to develop restless sleeping habits, grind their teeth during sleep, and have multiple ear infections and upper respiratory infections. Timing of treatment is essential and this is the ideal time for intervention. After age twelve tonsils usually begin to diminish in size. Thus, in the past, it was felt that the problems were being greatly reduced or eliminated. Today, however, we are becoming more aware of the dangers of sleep apnea in children as well as adults. We are recognizing the danger of doing nothing about enlarged tonsils and adenoids and how they affect facial growth. We now know that when we diagnose and treat early we increase the opportunity for the child to develop normally. By taking no action to remove any possible causes of airway obstruction, we may be affecting potential sleep problems for the rest of the child's life. It is in everyone's best interest to address this now instead of later.

The following are a few of the signs and symptoms of airway obstruction in children:

- Mouth breathing

- Tongue thrust
- Grinding of teeth during sleep
- Restless sleep habits
- Allergies
- Hyperactivity
- Limited attention span
- Crowded teeth
- Cross bites
- Child is underweight
- Hearing difficulties

We feel that children deserve the best chance of growing up with as few problems as possible. We know that their future success may be influenced by how they appear to their boss, clientele, etc. We want to help you give your child the best possible care possible. If you notice any of these symptoms please call the office at 231-744-6661 to make an appointment. For more information on sleep apnea, visit our website at www.drdonley.com.