

## Why this leaflet?

Your doctor/dentist/orthodontist/surgeon has sent you to me because it looks like that you have some kind of Myofunctional disorder or oral habits. If we don't interfere, this oral habit or Myofunctional disorder may lead to several problems in or around your mouth, like deformed dental arch or wrong positions of your teeth or ENT-problems.

In this leaflet I will explain to you different kinds of oral habits and the consequences from these habits.

### 1. Thumb- finger- and/or pacifier sucking

A lot of children suck on their finger(s) or pacifier. If a child continues this sucking after the year of three, it's a bad oral habit. This oral habit may lead to an abnormal form of the jaw(s) and/or abnormal position of the teeth. Moreover, it will lead to weaken the muscles in or around the mouth.

If these muscles weaken it will lead to mouth breathing, open mouth posture and very often a deviate swallow. Besides it will have a negative effect on speech: the child will get a lisp or other forms of wrong articulation.

### 2. Open mouth posture

Normally your mouth is closed, the tip of your tongue will rest behind the upper front teeth on the palate and you will breathe through your nose. When your mouth is quite frequently open during the day (b.i. during watching TV or sitting behind your computer) we call this open mouth posture. Very often the tongue lies weak down under in the mouth and will push against teeth. They will move then in a wrong direction. Moreover the lips are weakened and you will develop mouth breathing. If we don't treat this oral habit, it may lead to wrong formation of the jaws, wrong position of the teeth,

speech problems, and problems with tonsils and / or your ears.



### 3. Habitual mouth breathing

Habitual mouth breathing is seldom the result of obstructions in the nose. Mostly it is the reverse way: nose obstructions due to mouth breathing. Habitual mouth breathing means breathing through your mouth, while the nose is actually open. The results may be recurrent infections in the throat, the tonsils or recurrent middle-ear infections. Habitual mouth breathing has strong effects on the growth of the upper and lower jaw.

### 4. Tongue at rest in a wrong position

Normally the tip of the tongue at rest lies just behind the upper teeth on the palate. Any other position of the tip of the tongue at rest is wrong and causes deformation of the jaws and/or the teeth.

### 5. Lip-licking and lip-sucking

This oral habit is often seen in combination with mouth-breathing. The mouth will be dry due to mouth breathing and that's why patients like lip-licking or lip-sucking.

### 6. Wrong chewing pattern

Chewing at both sides of the mouth in the same time, swallowing big parts of food and making noise

while swallowing are the signs and symptoms of a deviate swallow and a deviate balance of the orofacial muscles.

### 7. Nail biting

During nail-biting the lower jaw moves forward and downward, causing tension on the muscles and ligaments of the joint of the jaws (Temporo-Mandibular Joint = TMJ). Illness and painful problems in this joint are not easy to treat by a dentist.

All above mentioned oral habits may lead to the deviate swallow

### 8. Deviate swallow

We speak of a deviate swallow if the tongue becomes against or in between the teeth during swallowing. During every day we swallow approximately 2000 times. If the tongue pushed against or in between the teeth in a wrong matter that will definitely influence the form of the dental arch and the position of the teeth as well. Moreover it will lead easily to relapse after orthodontic treatment



## The SLT or myo-functional therapist

Myo-functional therapy is frequently done by speech therapists (logopēds) and sometimes by a dentist. If there are signs and symptoms of Myofunctional disorders, it is important to start treatment in an early stage of the mixed dentition, which is around 6-8 years of age. Later is possible as well, but the negative influence of oral habits and wrong swallowing may be greater than if you start earlier.

Myofunctional therapy will take around 10 - 20 treatment sessions.

The treatment consists of:

- Intake session
- Taking pictures of the posture, the mouth and the teeth
- Measurements of some oro-facial muscles including the tongue
- Visualising the deviate swallow
- Treatment of the deviate swallow and oral habits
- Repeating the exercises (instructed during the sessions) at home
- In the last session re-measuring of the oro-facial muscles, which are in harmony now

## THE RESULTS



Before treatment



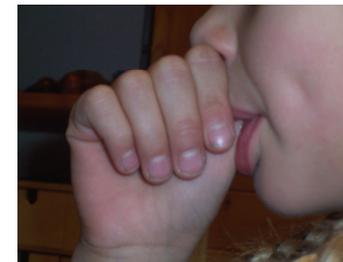
After three months



After six months

## MYOFUNCTIONAL THERAPY

### ORAL HABITS



**Peter Helderop, the Netherlands**

SLT, Lecturer Myofunctional Therapy

**Berry P.M. Verlinden, the Netherlands**

Dentist, Implantologist, Prosthodontist, Gnathologist,

Lecturer Myofunctional Therapy