

# DID YOU KNOW: Facts about CORRECTING DENTAL CONDITIONS & ABNORMALITIES

## The Dental Evaluation

Children born with facial deformities often have abnormalities with their teeth and occlusion (bite). These problems can affect their speech, ability to eat and their appearance.

The first and most important step in the initial evaluation of a Little Baby Face Foundation patient is the determination if the child is in pain due to dental cavities. Many of our patients are from developing nations and have never had their teeth examined. Some of our patients have large cavities and dental infections that have been neglected for years.

The dental evaluation also includes special measurements of the LBFF's patient's occlusion. This involves analyzing how the front and back teeth come together

and whether the jaws meet correctly. Our patients with the diagnosis of upper and lower hemi-facial microsomia have occlusion issues due to the hypo-development of the lower jaw. These issues can include problems such as open bites, mid-line shifts, and constriction of the maxilla or mandible. Any of these problems can interfere with ability to properly speak, chew or swallow.

The dental exam of our LBFF patients would not be complete without the evaluation of the soft tissue of the mouth including the gums. Again, many of our patients coming from underdeveloped areas of the world have never been instructed in oral hygiene (ie., tooth brushing and flossing). Many patients, even our young patients, have heavy plaque and tartar accumulations and gingivitis.

## Corrective Procedures

All dental cavities are repaired in our Little Baby Face patients. This includes fillings (both white and silver), root canals, and crowns in both baby and adult teeth. Abscessed teeth are removed and space maintainers are fabricated where indicated. These dental procedures are done under general anesthesia in the hospital setting and are often combined with other surgical procedures. For example, a child may have an ear reconstruction and complete dental rehabilitation done during one hospital admission.

Treatment for jaw discrepancies can also be addressed by the Little Baby Face Foundation's doctors. Interceptive orthodontic appliances can be made to move teeth, as well as to move segments of bone to better align the upper and lower jaw. An example of this would be the design and

fabrication of a Hyrax Appliance. This device can actually expand a constricted maxilla by rapid palatal expansion. These are fabricated for our patients by the use of orthodontic bands, impressions, in a dental laboratory, which allows for a custom-made appliance for each patient.

Lastly, oral hygiene sessions for Little Baby Face patients are part of our comprehensive dental service. Both patients and parents are instructed on both brushing and flossing techniques. The proper dental equipment are given to the patients which include electric toothbrushes, electric dental flossers, fluoride rinses, and fluoride gels. Special techniques are taught to our patients to overcome any handicaps or disabilities that may prevent proper hygiene. These sessions are invaluable and last a lifetime for child who has never had the opportunity to learn about proper dental care.



### SPOTLIGHT:

LBFF Medical Advisory Board Member  
**Deborah Pilla, DDS, PC**

Dr. Deborah Pilla has been making children smile since 1981. She earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree at SUNY at Buffalo and completed her pediatric dental residency at Montefiore Medical Center. She also completed a pediatric dental fellowship at Columbia University. She has also earned a New York state certification in dental sedation. Dr. Pilla is a member of the American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, American Association of Women Dentists and the New York Society of Dentistry for Children. She is affiliated with Lenox Hill Hospital.

As a dedicated member of the LBFF Medical Advisory Board, Dr. Pilla provides the necessary dental evaluations and correctives procedures described in the article above.

