

## **OROFACIAL MYOFUNCTIONAL THERAPY EXPLAINED**

Orofacial myofunctional therapy (OMT) is a treatment that involves exercises designed to retrain the muscles of the face and mouth, aiming to correct improper functions like tongue posture, swallowing patterns, and breathing habits. Essentially, it's a form of physical therapy for the muscles of the mouth and face, focusing on improving their positioning and function through targeted exercises.

An Orofacial myofunctional treatment (OMT) can improve the following:

- Speech Disorders
- Dental alignment
- Facial development
- Swallowing
- Jaw pain
- Discontinue oral habits such as thumb and finger sucking

Speech Pathologists or Dental Hygienists who are trained in Orofacial myofunctional disorders (OMD) provide diagnosis and treatment. Orofacial myofunctional therapy typically starts at age 4. However, as a speech pathologist who is trained in OMD's I start some therapeutic techniques that are related to orofacial myofunctional treatment strategies as young as 6 months old.

### **Things that can help your child develop appropriately without a disorder include:**

- Getting rid of the pacifier as soon as possible
- Limited use of sippy cups. Sippy cups are for parents to help decrease messes. They are not good for your child.
- Using a straw and open cup as early as possible. The honey bear cup is helpful to start young children with straws.
- A "360" cup is not an open cup, as you have to manipulate your jaw and use different muscles to get the liquid.
- Do not allow your child to suck from a pouch. You can use a pouch, but put it on a spoon and then feed your child. Sucking from these pouches promotes continuing an infantile swallow (thrusting) rather than a mature adult swallow, which can negatively impact muscle strength and safe swallowing.
- If your child is snoring or has an open mouth posture get an appointment with an ENT to assess their airway. Snoring babies and open mouth posture is not normal.

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