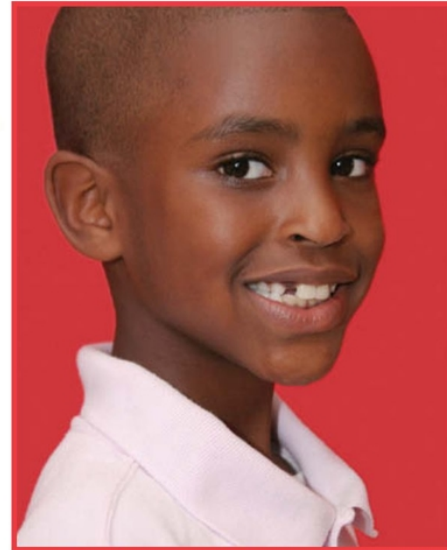
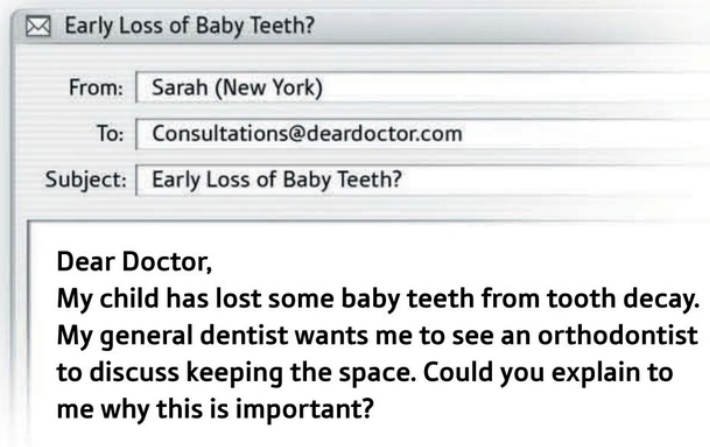


CONSULTATIONS IN ORTHODONTICS

Early Loss of Baby Teeth

Importance of maintaining the space caused by the premature loss of baby teeth

A Consultation with Dr. Barry Kayne



Dear Sarah,

Your dentist and orthodontist understand the complex dynamics of growth and development of the jaws. What is essential for you to know is that the baby teeth also serve a very important function of maintaining space. If they are lost prematurely, the spaces created can dramatically shrink becoming smaller and smaller, leaving insufficient space available for the permanent (adult) teeth. As soon as the six-year molars have erupted into the mouth, it is important not to let them drift forward into the spaces created by premature loss of baby teeth. A “space maintenance appliance”, a type of “retainer”, can be used which can also help socially if the missing tooth or teeth show. If the spaces are not prevented from shrinking, the permanent teeth will come in crowded or crooked. As your child grows and matures these misaligned permanent teeth could necessitate prolonged orthodontic treatment (braces) with consequent greater financial impact.

Maintaining space is therefore to your advantage. It is unfortunate that your child has lost his/her baby teeth earlier than normal, but as you can see space maintenance can be critically important. If your child ultimately needs orthodontics to straighten his/her teeth, the possibility of needing further teeth extracted will be a reduced. Moreover, a beautiful smile could be compromised by not maintaining space should the baby teeth be lost prematurely. Be sure to ask you dentist or orthodontist about what to do if your child has to lose a baby tooth prematurely.

Sincerely,
Barry S. Kayne, DDS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barry S. Kayne, DDS

Dr. Barry Kayne received his DDS degree in 1969 from Ohio University. After extensive study, Dr. Kayne earned dual certification in 1979 in both periodontics and orthodontics from the University of Pennsylvania. His practice specializes in periodontics, implantology, adult orthodontics and the diagnosis and treatment of TMJ. Dr. Kayne has lectured extensively and has been on the staff of the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Veterans Hospital of Philadelphia, Wilmington Medical Center, and Delaware Technical and Community College.

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