ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT TIMING:

Ideally, orthodontists prefer to wait until most or all of the permanent (adult) teeth have erupted before starting comprehensive treatment.

- Average age for girls = 11 years old
- Average age for boys = 12 years old

However, one or more of the following problems may be an indication for interceptive (early) orthodontic treatment.

1. **Posterior Crossbite**
   - Unilateral or bilateral involving at least the 1st molars.
   - Early treatment is preferable to expand the upper jaw before fusion of mid-palatal sutures (fibrous junction between upper jaw and base of skull) at around age 10.
   - Treatment Time = 6-12 months.
   - Consequences of No Treatment – Asymmetric jaw growth that can become permanent.

2. **Anterior Crossbite Related to a Class III bite (Underbite)**
   - Clinical Signs - Minimal or negative (reverse) overjet and/or concave profile.

3. **Traumatic Occlusion / Bite**
   - Early treatment is important because tooth loss can be the “worst case scenario”
   - Treatment Time = 3-6 months.

4. **Prolonged Finger or Thumb Sucking Habit (after age 7)**
   - Clinical Signs – Anterior open bite, posterior crossbite, flared or protrusive upper front teeth.
   - Treatment Time = 6-9 months.

5. **Ectopic Eruption and Impacting Teeth**
   - Most common ectopically erupting teeth – Upper 1st molars, especially if seen more gingival than primary 2nd molars or even partially under them.
   - Most common impacted teeth – 3rd molars (wisdom teeth) followed by upper canines.
   - Clinical Signs – Retained primary canines (past age 13-14).
   - Early detection can be accomplished by taking a panoramic x-ray at age 10.
   - Consequences of No Treatment – Root resorption of lateral incisors, ankylosis of permanent upper canines, longer and more expensive treatment.

6. **Esthetic Appearance of Teeth is Negatively Impacting Patient’s Self-Esteem**

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