



Getting It Straight

by Dr. Kirk Christensen,
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Subject: *An interesting follow-up to my last article about micro-implants.*

This is not my usual Q and A article. Last time I wrote about the development and uses of the micro-screw implants that we orthodontists are now using to help move teeth to desired locations in the bone. The principal is that we are using the jaw bone itself as an anchor unit while we move the teeth with springs and elastics attached to a temporary screw or small screwed on plate. The screws go through the gum tissue and into the jaw bones above or at the level of the tooth roots. As I said, there is new research published every month, and it is quite exciting. An article on page 599 in the November 2007 American Journal Of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics describes research comparing closure of severe anterior open bites in adults by jaw surgery and by skeletal anchorage with micro screw implants. Anterior (front teeth) open bite is one of the most difficult malocclusions to correct and often is the least stable when corrected. It is recognized as contact of the upper and lower posterior teeth (molars and sometimes bicuspids) with gradually less contact of upper and lower teeth as you move toward the front of the mouth. The resulting gap between the upper and lower incisors is often 5-10 mm's in height (making biting into a sandwich a real challenge). In non-growing patients, we have had to depend on jaw surgery to assist our orthodontics to get the bite closed. This article demonstrated that upper and lower posterior teeth can be intruded into the bone via the anchor plates and elastics, thus allowing the lower jaw to rotate forward and upward, thus closing the anterior bite. So far the results seem as, or more, effective than jaw surgery, yet without the negatives of surgery (cost, general anesthesia, pain, tissue numbness, skeletal relapse). This is truly a thrilling study, and is something I would likely be willing to offer my open bite patients as an alternative to jaw surgery. ! Dr. Christensen's column appears weekly in the Northwest Herald. Questions to be answered and treatment inquiries may be directed to: **Woodstock Orthodontics c/o Kirk H. Christensen, DDS, 226 West Judd Street, Woodstock, IL 60098, Phone: 815-337-5522**