

permanent ones appear, one on each side above and below, back of all the others, usually at the age of 6, and by this fact are commonly called the six year molars—more properly the first molar. Right here education is sorely needed. The average parent counts this as one of the temporary set, and regards it of little value, while in reality it is the most important tooth in the whole denture. This first molar, coming when it does, regulates the distance the two jaws are to assume when dentition is complete. If through carelessness or accident the two lower ones are lost, the jaws will come too close together, and an ill-shaped face result. The first molar has the broadest masticating surface, has the most staunch implantation and is placed in that part of the jaw where crunching is most effective. Notwithstanding its great utility, it seems to be more subject to destructive influences than any other tooth. There are several reasons for this—the chief being non-use. If the child's temporary molars (in front of these six years) become decayed and sensitive, as is the case with most children, it cannot and does not chew its food, and in consequence this tooth does not get the use or exercise that nature intended it to have. Every year now brings into use four more of the permanent set until the twelfth year is reached, then a period of some years elapses before the 3rd molar or "Wisdom" tooth appears. This tooth is usually erupted at the age of 18, but it is often delayed and in some cases never appears. When the adult has all teeth in position there should be 32, but it is indeed an exception to see an individual possessing the allotted number. It is a deplorable fact that even today so many people will persist in extracting teeth needlessly, thus crippling the masticating powers.

Clean teeth do not decay nor do they promote germ breeding. Decay goes on more rapidly from infancy until 21 years of age and the teeth require more attention during this period than any other. After the age of three the child should be looked after regularly by a reliable and competent dentist, to see that the mouth is kept clean and healthy and the teeth filled where there are cavities, because the decayed places, if painful, cause the child to swallow foods without proper mastication. As soon as possible the child should be trained in the use of a tooth-brush, and the habit, once acquired, will never be left off.

Oral hygiene is just beginning to come into its own. Physicians are recognizing its importance to the health of the individual, and the laity are awakening to the fact that unclean, unhealthy immoral mouths are a menace to their welfare and the cause of the great bulk of disease and infection. As the stream becomes polluted at its source, so also is the body possessing a foul unsanitary mouth.