



PRESS RELEASE

## What are Tongue Spurs?

### A Question Answered by the Sacramento Dentistry Group

**SACRAMENTO, CA—May 30, 2018** — A patient recently asked for clarification on the role of tongue spurs. They are not a growth of some kind on the tongue. Instead, they are a training tool for the tongue. Here the Sacramento Dentistry Group explains why tongue spurs are needed in dentistry and how they work.

#### Who Needs Tongue Spurs?

For most people, the tongue rests and acts in the mouth without actively pushing against the teeth. In some mouths, however, the tongue is constantly pressing against the front teeth, especially when speaking and swallowing, a problem called “tongue thrust.” This leads to a condition called “open bite.” With an open bite, even when the mouth is closed, the upper and lower teeth do not touch. This serious malocclusion requires repair with [orthodontics](#). Unfortunately, if the tongue thrusting habit is not changed, the open bite returns. Thus, there is a need for tongue spurs.

#### Tongue Spurs — a Training Tool

For a horseback rider, spurs are used to train or command a horse. In patients with tongue thrust, the “spurs” teach the tongue to change its habits. [Tongue spurs](#) do not actually damage the tongue, but they do cause discomfort if the patient tries to tongue thrust. One orthodontic study indicated that after ten days, the average patient no longer feels discomfort from using tongue spurs. In this short period, the spurs are already retraining the tongue, making it possible to repair the teeth.

Spurs may be attached individually to the back of the front teeth, or they may be attached to a wire that connects to the first molars and then reaches forward to the back of the front teeth, much like a snap-in retainer. Use of both can be discontinued when the tongue is fully retrained. Training the tongue can be accomplished in six to seven months, according to one study published by Marquette University. Ending the thrusting even creates an improvement in the bite, making it easier to fix the problem with orthodontic treatment.

For more information about treatment for an open bite, and the use of tongue spurs for tongue thrust, contact the helpful dentists at the Sacramento Dentistry Group. They are reached through their website at [sacramentodentistry.com](#) or by calling 916-538-6900.