

# Over-Retained Teeth

## What is an Over-Retained tooth?

**When a baby tooth hasn't fallen out and the adult (permanent) tooth erupts behind it, the baby tooth is referred to as being 'over-retained' or a 'shark' tooth.**

The adult tooth typically develops beneath the root of the baby tooth, leading to the resorption of the baby tooth's roots. This process causes the baby tooth to loosen and eventually fall out, allowing the adult tooth to take its place.

However, there are times when the adult tooth does not grow directly beneath the baby tooth, which can slow down the resorption of the roots. In such cases, the adult tooth may erupt while the baby tooth is still in place. This is completely normal and isn't a cause for concern.

### Over-retained top front tooth



### Over-retained lower front tooth



## What should you do if this happens?

- In most cases, encouraging your child to gently wiggle their over-retained baby tooth will help it fall out, allowing the adult tooth to move into the correct position.
- If your child experiences discomfort while wiggling their tooth, a small dab of Bonjela\* on their gum can help. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly before applying it.
- On occasion, removal of the tooth may be recommended if the tooth isn't wiggly and is affecting the eruption path of the adult tooth.
- Contact Bee Healthy at 0800 TALK TEETH to speak with a dental professional or to book an assessment appointment if you have any concerns.

*\*Please consult your pharmacist to ensure Bonjela is suitable for your child.*

**For information about free dental care for under 18s:**

**Visit: [www.beehealthy.org.nz](http://www.beehealthy.org.nz) Call: 0800 TALK TEETH (0800 825 583)**