

Kimberly A. Bell, M.S. CCC-SLP



Speech-Language Pathologist
Myofunctional Therapist

“There is nothing that I find more gratifying than helping my clients live happier and healthier lives.”

Kimberly Bell has provided high quality speech and language services to Carroll County and the surrounding areas through her private practice, SPEECH PATHways, since 1999. She specializes in thumb-sucking elimination (and other oral habits), tongue thrust remediation, severe articulation disorders, childhood apraxia of speech and speech-language development/remediation.

In 2017, SPEECH PATHways was certified in myofunctional therapy using The Simon Says Speech program. We are a group of highly trained and specialized speech-language pathologists offering myofunctional therapy. The Simon Says Team firmly believes in providing a full package service that includes tongue thrust remediation and speech articulation therapy through positive reinforcement. As a strong and consistent presence in Carroll County for nearly two decades, SPEECH PATHways is the number one choice for referring pediatricians, doctors, ENT's, and orthodontists. We partner with families to form a team that can best meet the needs of adults or children.

TESTIMONIALS

“I have always suffered from a tongue thrust. This is the first program that has worked. And I am gaining my confidence.
— Jack

“I wanted to get braces on my daughter but the orthodontist informed me that she had a tongue thrust and our investment would not be wise unless we got some help from a speech therapist. We just loved Kim and the program worked so well!
— Maggie

The logo for 'simon says' features the word 'simon' in blue and 'says' in orange, with a stylized orange 's' that has three curved lines above it, resembling a tongue or a signal.

USE YOUR

The logo for 'TONGUE Tips' features the word 'TONGUE' in large blue capital letters, with a blue tongue sticking out of the 'O'. To the right, the word 'Tips' is written in orange cursive on a white rectangular background with a blue border and a folded bottom-right corner. Below this, the text 'A TONGUE THRUST REMEDIATION PROGRAM' is written in blue capital letters.

A TONGUE THRUST REMEDIATION PROGRAM

WWW.SPEECHPATHWAYS.NET
The Shoppes at Meadow Creek
410 Meadow Creek Drive, Suite 206
Westminster, Maryland 21158
410-374-0555
kim.bell@speechpathways.net

What is a tongue thrust?

A tongue thrust is known by many names—reverse or immature swallow, orofacial muscle dysfunction, or deviant swallow pattern. All of these refer to the resting posture of the tongue against the teeth and the pushing of the tongue against the teeth during a swallow. Experts estimate that we swallow 500 to 1000 times a day with between 4 and 8 pounds of pressure per swallow. This constant pressure pushes the teeth out of place, causing an abnormal bite known as *malocclusion*.

Why does tongue thrust happen?

There are several possible causes of tongue thrust including allergies, enlarged tonsils, a short lingual frenulum, and neurological, muscular, or structural abnormalities such as a high, narrow palate. Tongue thrust often develops as a result of sucking habits relating to the thumbs, fingers, or pacifiers.

Symptoms can include mouth breathing with a lips apart posture, forward hanging tongue at rest, and pushing of the tongue against either the anterior (front) or lateral (sides) of the teeth when swallowing.

Signs of a Tongue Thrust

high arched palate



lips apart/forward resting tongue



anterior open bite



frontal tongue thrust



lateral tongue thrust



Types of Tongue Thrust

Should I be concerned about a tongue thrust?

That constant, improperly placed pressure of the tongue over time can cause significant problems with a person's dental health, speech, and cosmetic appearance. Misalignment of the teeth (malocclusion) can also cause patients to become more susceptible to periodontal disease or "gum disease." Malocclusion also can cause "jaw joint" problems, facial pain, difficulty biting or chewing food, and excessive grinding of the teeth (bruxing).

A tongue thrust may cause difficulty with forming sounds of normal speech and may present in the form of a lisp and/or other misarticulations. In addition, a person who swallows incorrectly will often purse and tighten the muscles of the cheeks, chin, and lips—a symptom known as a facial grimace. Over time, this can cause long term changes to the structure of the face.

What can I do about a tongue thrust?

Effectively correcting a tongue thrust requires an interdisciplinary approach. The best results are almost always achieved by working with a team of experts that may include an orthodontist, a dentist, and a speech therapist trained in orofacial myofunctional therapy. Even with the work of an orthodontist and dentist to correct problems that have already occurred, the habit at the root of the issue must be addressed to prevent further complications and promote long-term success with your orthodontic investments.

Through programs such as "Tongue Tips", therapists work to re-train the muscles of the face and tongue for proper posture within the mouth and to correct the swallowing motion. Although consistent commitment is necessary for success, many patients are able to simply and effectively eliminate the long-term problems associated with a tongue thrust—and enjoy renewed health and self-confidence. These kind of results make therapy that's "easy to swallow."