

## Caring for your Expander

A palatal expander is an appliance that is glued to your upper teeth and used to orthopedically widen the upper jaw by separating your midpalatal suture. This procedure may also allow for the creation of more space into which permanent teeth can erupt.

The expansion appliance is activated once a day for the amount of days instructed. Below are detailed instructions on how to turn (expand) the appliance

Have your child lay on his/her back on a bed or a sofa where there is adequate lighting. Have your child open their mouth as wide as possible. Place the key at a 90-degree angle to the handle. Insert the key into the hole at the center of the screw. Once the key has locked into place; rotate the handle toward the nose. The key needs to be turned (pushed) toward the back of the mouth as indicated by the arrows. Push the key as far down as possible. You will feel resistance when the screw can no longer be turned. A new hole in the front of the screw will appear for the next turn. To remove the key, gently wiggle the key down and out. Be careful not to turn up when removing the key or you will lose the next hole. If the hole becomes obstructed or "lost" it may be necessary to complete the last turn again. You will need to go in and find the last hole that was turned, pushing it further down until you feel resistance.



During activation, some pressure may be experienced at the bridge of the nose, around the ears and cheeks or between upper front teeth. This feeling is to be expected during the use of the appliance. The feeling of sharp pain is not a usual occurrence and should be reported immediately. Your child may experience some difficulty chewing during the first 24-48 hours. After approximately one week, a space may open between the two front teeth. This is a normal occurrence that indicates that the therapy is working.

It is important that the space between the appliance and the roof of the mouth be thoroughly cleaned, preferably with a WaterPik or some other type of irrigation system. If food debris is left between the appliance and the roof of the mouth, it can be a source of irritation and may be very uncomfortable to the patient. In extreme circumstances, localized infections may result.

If the appliance becomes loose or if there is persistent pain, please notify the office as soon as possible. If the bands are bothering the side of the mouth, place a small amount of wax along the area. Do not place wax on the screw portion of the appliance; it will interfere with turning.

During the active phase of treatment with this appliance, it is of utmost importance to be seen on a regular basis as instructed. If for some reason the patient misses an appointment, the expanding of the appliance should be discontinued until he/she is seen.

PLEASE DO NOT play with the expander with your tongue or fingers. This may cause the expander to come loose, and not fit properly in the mouth. If the expander becomes loose at any time please call the office.