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Diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics

Practice Limited to Orthodontics / Dentofacial Orthopedics

Your New Expander

PURPOSE

The fixed expansion appliance is used to widen the upper dental arch in order to improve the bite and / or create more space for crowded teeth. Since the appliance is cemented/bonded to the upper teeth, it is to be worn 24 hours per day.

ACTIVATION

Turning the inner screw with a special key activates the expansion appliance. Upon activation, most patients feel pressure in the upper jaw, nose, ears, and cheek area or between the front teeth that will last several minutes; **this is normal**. A space will occur between the incisors (front teeth); this is also normal with this appliance. If significant or prolonged discomfort occurs after turning, please call us. **TO ACTIVATE:** make sure the key is grasped firmly between your index finger and thumb. You should then insert the key into the hole in the middle and push it back toward the throat *until the next hole becomes visible*. Remove the key from the hole by moving it down toward the back of the mouth, not forward.



EATING

Initially, there will be some awkwardness in eating and swallowing; this soon goes away. Your diet will need some slight changes. For the first few days stick to liquids and very soft foods such as eggs, yogurt, mashed potatoes, pasta, etc...chewing small pieces is helpful. After this short period of adaptation, most foods can be consumed. However, you should continue to stay away from hard and sticky foods.

CLEANING

It is very important to keep your appliance clean. Food and tartar can build up on the edges, so we recommend a quick rinse or scrub after meals. Scrub your fixed expansion appliance thoroughly with your toothbrush and toothpaste at least once a day. It is very important to scrub the edges of your appliance at the gum line so that redness and soreness do not develop. It is also very important that the space between the appliance and the roof of your mouth be kept very clean, using either a water pik or vigorously swishing water in the mouth. If food debris is left there, it will cause irritation and discomfort to the top of the mouth.



SPEECH

Your fixed expansion appliance will usually alter speech for several weeks as you get used to it. We strongly recommend slowly reading out loud for 5 to 10 minutes each night to practice your pronunciation. This speeds up the adaptation process.

COMFORT

At the sides of the appliance are some metal attachments that may initially irritate the inside of the cheeks. Soft wax will be given to press over this area while your mouth is adapting. Also, quite helpful is the use of warm salt water rinses twice daily for the first week (1/4 teaspoon of salt in ½ cup of water).

OTHER THINGS

If the appliance becomes loose, do not turn it anymore and call our office for an appointment right away. Keep the appliance seated on your teeth so that the upper jaw doesn't lose its width increase. If the appliance comes off the teeth, rinse and brush it and place it over the teeth again. **DO NOT** activate the appliance, but continue to wear it. Please call our office immediately. After the activation phase of expansion, there will be a holding period to allow the change in the upper jaw to stabilize before the appliance is removed. This usually lasts from 6 to 8 months.