

Rapid Palatal Expander

Expanding Instructions:

Once the appliance is cemented, the activation for expansion is done once or twice a day unless otherwise instructed by your orthodontist. Make certain the plastic safety ring or string is around the fingers. Carefully insert the key into the hole or slot in the middle of the appliance. Gently and steadily push the key from the front of the mouth to the back of the mouth. Before removing the key from the back of the mouth, make certain the next hole is readily visible and in position.

Appointments:

During the active phase of expansion, the patient is seen once a week. In the retentive or stabilization phase (after activation has stopped) the patient is seen every 1 – 2 months. Treatment time for these appointments is usually 2 – 4 weeks for expansion and 1 – 2 months for retention.

Expectations:

Activation of the appliance causes pressure on the teeth and bone. This may result in discomfort or soreness of the teeth and cheekbones around the middle of the face. The front two teeth may become sore. To alleviate the discomfort, any over-the-counter pain medication such as Tylenol or Advil may be given 30 minutes prior to activation of the appliance.

A space between the front two teeth may appear. This is a good sign. It indicated that the upper jaw is expanding. The teeth will slowly come back together in 2 – 4 weeks or will be brought back together with braces.

Difficulty with speech and excessive salivation is experienced during the first 3 – 5 days. The patient may tend to make sure slurping sounds while the appliance is in place.

Difficulty with chewing and swallowing may be experienced. To overcome this, it may be helpful to eat soft foods for the first few days and bring the lips together when swallowing.

Appliance Home Care:

Brush your teeth as always, over and around the appliance and after each meal. It may be necessary to swish water or mouth rinse forcefully to remove food from between the roof of the mouth and the appliance. A fluoride mouth rinse is best when trying to prevent decalcification on the teeth.

Checking the Appliance:

During your treatment it is a good idea to check your appliance (*gently*) from time to time to ensure that it is not coming loose. If the appliance is loose or starts to come loose please be sure to push the appliance back into position and call the office at your earliest convenience to make an appointment to get it repositioned.

