

Instructions for the Palatal Expander (2x/day)

The palatal expander is a fixed (glued-in) appliance designed to expand the upper arch. It is comparable to a screw that is soldered to the bands on your back teeth. When it is glued in, the screw is turned and gradually it makes the arch and the teeth expand, either to correct a crossbite, to enlarge the arch if you are crowded, or to do both.

How to activate the expander:

In the roof of your mouth is a screw mechanism. It has a key hole in it where the key is placed to turn the screw. The screw is turned twice a day, unless instructed otherwise. The key is turned until it touches the back of the appliance. It is removed towards the back of the throat, making sure you do not unscrew the appliance when you take the key out of the screw (or the hole will not line up for the next turn). The appliance will be activated for approximately 7-12 days. If for some reason you are unable to make your routine monitoring appointment, be sure to stop turning the appliance. Without proper supervision, you could create other problems, such as overexpansion. Remember, if the arch is not expanding, we will need to send you to the surgeon for surgical assistance.

After the expansion is completed, the appliance will need to stay for at least 3 months to help stabilize the expansion. If taken out too soon, some expansion can be lost.

Things to expect with your new appliance:

1) When a turn is made, pressure may be felt, sometimes as high as the bridge of the nose. The feeling of pressure should last only a short time. Turning of the key should not be painful. If prolonged pain is felt after turning the key, call our office.

2) Three to five days after you start turning the screw, you can expect to see a space appear between your front teeth. As further key turns are made, this space will enlarge. Once the expansion is completed, the space will start to gradually close.

3) Your tongue is used to fitting snugly in the roof of your mouth when you eat, swallow, or speak. It will take a short time for you and your tongue to get used to the wire on the palatal expander. It is going to feel awkward eating, swallowing, and speaking for a while. But, you will be doing these things normally before you know it.

4) With the expander in your mouth and glued to your teeth, it will be very necessary that you clean the appliance thoroughly each day. Food debris and plaque will build up around the wires and bands. If left there, it can cause cavities, gum problems, or even bad breath. So, brush after eating anything at all. Brush your teeth and the top of your tongue. Swish very hard with plain water to wash out any food debris that may be left behind. And, use the fluoride rinse to help decrease the possible damage to your enamel from not cleaning completely.

5) Your speech will be a little different for a few days. With some practice it will return to normal quickly. Practice by talking a lot in private and singing to the radio.

6) Be careful what you put in your mouth. Having this appliance in your mouth is just like having braces. Without being careful, you can loosen up the bands or damage the screw.

7) Do not be alarmed when you see an impression on the top of your tongue from the wire and screw. This is normal, and it will go away after the expander is removed. Sometimes the tongue gets a little tender from pushing on the expander so much. Eventually, you will learn to control the tongue from pushing on the appliance.

It is very important to follow our instructions closely. If you should have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask Dr. Riordan or one of our staff members. Thank you for choosing our office. We look forward to working with you!

PLEASE BE SURE TO MARK THE CHART EACH TIME YOU TURN THE SCREW:

| Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun |
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Total Turns: _____