

Our mission is to make a difference by creating customized smiles that our patients can be proud of for the rest of their lives.

We accomplish our mission by applying 400 years of combined experience in world-renowned techniques of orthodontics, by taking pride in discovering and developing the uniqueness of each and every patient, by believing in the skill and dependability of our team, and by never taking shortcuts.

It is our hope that by staying loyal to each other and our patients, we will continue to know the pride and excitement, the laughter and security, and the self-satisfaction that comes from spending every day amazed by the joy that we bring to every life we touch.



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"It's never too early to invest in a smile."™



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Your Palate Expansion Appliance



Specialists in Orthodontics and Maxillofacial Orthopedics

About Your Palate Expansion Appliance

1. What is a palate expander?

The palate expansion appliance is a custom fit appliance designed to widen your upper teeth. It fits in the roof of the mouth and is cemented to the upper side teeth.



Palate expansion appliance in place

2. Is the expander removable?

No, the expander will stay in during the expansion procedure and for a three-month stabilization period following the expansion. Most patients will have the expander in place for four to six months.

3. Will I become accustomed to the expander?

Yes, however, it typically takes 24-48 hours to become comfortable with your new expander.

4. How does it work?

The expander has a center screw that works in a similar fashion as a car jack. In fact, it is sometimes referred to as a "Jack-Screw".

Turning the screw causes the appliance and the upper dental arch to widen.



Palate expansion appliance before turning



Palate expansion appliance after turning

5. Does the expander hurt?

While the placement of the expander will be uncomfortable, the actual turning of the screw should not hurt. If the expander ever causes pain when it is turned, immediately stop turning and notify the office.

6. What should I expect to see with my expansion appliance?

In younger patients, a space may develop between the two upper front teeth. This is normal and means the appliance is functioning correctly. This space can sometimes get quite large, as much as 7mm, and is an indicator of a good result. Please do not be alarmed by the space, it is temporary, and will start to close as soon as the expander is fully opened.



Example of normal expansion spacing in a young patient



Another example of normal expansion spacing in a young patient



Palate expansion appliance in an adult patient
Note the tipping of the upper side teeth

In older patients, spacing of the front teeth is possible, but it is rarely seen. If spacing does occur, it is usually only 1-2mm. Sometimes the side teeth (where the expander connects) will tip outward toward the cheek.



Following expansion, the upper teeth may appear "too wide"

Most expansion cases are "over-treated".

This is to allow for relapse after the expander is removed. Relapse is a fact of orthodontic life, and our experience shows the best way to treat and deal with relapse is to overcorrect. As a result of overcorrection, the upper teeth may have the appearance of being "too wide" immediately following the expansion procedure. Please do not be alarmed as this is a temporary condition.

7. What are the potential problems?

As previously noted, if the expander is turned too quickly, excessive pressure can result, which may cause pain or discomfort.

8. What should I do if it hurts?

1. Stop turning immediately.
2. If the pain/pressure does not resolve within an hour, try taking a turn off the appliance. This is done by inserting the key in the back of the appliance and turning forward. If done properly, this will almost always resolve the pain.
3. Call the office for an appointment to evaluate the expander before placing any additional turns.

9. What are the benefits of expansion?

- Creates space for crowded front teeth.



Example of crowded front teeth



The space gained by the expansion will be used to align the crowded front teeth in this case

- Corrects a cross-bite of the back teeth, if one was initially present



An expander will be used to correct a cross-bite in this case

- Improves the width of the smile and its appearance



Dave before palatal expansion



Dave after palatal expansion

- Improves the airway if constriction of the nasal passages are blocking the airflow