

RAPID PALATAL EXPANDER (RPE)

The palate widening appliance is a specially made device used to expand the upper arch or roof of the mouth. There are several reasons to widen the arch. First, by widening the upper arch, the upper teeth may line up better with the lower teeth, giving the patient a better bite. Second, where a high palate and a narrow arch restrict the breathing passage located above, widening the palate widens the air passage. Then, the patient can breathe more easily through his nose. Third, widening the palate can make more room for crowded teeth to align better.

The expanding action of the appliance gently separates the elastic membrane in the center of the palate. Once the palate has been expanded fully, new bone tissue fills that space.

The upper arch is usually expanded enough in 15-20 days. However, the appliance is allowed to remain in the mouth for a longer period, while new bone is generating in the expanded arch.

Once the orthodontist has cemented the palate widening device in place, it is you who will activate it. This is done twice every day, once in the morning and once in the evening, unless we direct you otherwise.

HOW TO ACTIVATE THE EXPANDER:

1. Open your mouth as wide a possible.
2. Carefully insert the key into the hole or slot in the middle of the appliance.
3. Gently and steadily push the key from the front toward the back of the mouth. Remove the key toward the throat. You automatically bring the new key hole position forward by pushing the key as far back as possible. It will be ready for the next activation.,

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

You will notice that widening the palate also temporarily causes a space between the two front teeth. DO NOT be alarmed. The space will close again naturally once the expansion is done.

Also, the same pressure on the roof of the mouth may cause a tingling sensation at the bridge of the nose. Usually, any over-the-counter Ibuprofen pain reliever will effectively relieve discomfort. If it does not, call the office so we can check your appliance carefully.

For most people, this procedure is not painful, though there may be some initial discomfort and some feeling of "pressure" as the arch expands. This pressure causes a tingling or an itch under the appliance.

You may salivate (saliva) more than usual for the first couple of days. This will disappear as your mouth becomes accustomed to the expander. Swallowing may feel different. This too will get better over time.

You will find that your speech may be slightly different with the expander in place. It will get better in a couple of days and it will return to normal as soon as the appliance is removed.

Brushing is extremely important. You must make sure you clean around the bands with your toothbrush.

Taking care of your expander also requires that you eliminate certain foods that can cause damage. You must avoid: GUM, CAMEL, GUMMY BEARS, TAFFY, STARBURST, NOW & LATER, ICE CUBES and any other hard/chewy/sticky foods.

If any food gets caught, flush with water either by gargling, using a WaterPik or some kind of spray action.

Please feel free to contact the office if you have any questions or concerns.