

# PETTY & DRAGSTREM

## ORTHODONTICS

### expanders

what do they do?

Expanders widen the roof of the mouth usually to fix a deficiency in the size of the upper jaw. They fix crossbites (upper teeth fitting on the inside of the lower teeth) and narrow upper jaws. They also can make space for blocked out teeth or teeth that are crowded out of position.

how do they work?

The expander is glued onto the back molar teeth and a screw is connecting the two bands in the middle. When a turn is completed in the screw, it puts gentle pressure on the teeth and bone to slowly widen the suture that runs across the top of the mouth. Typically as we widen the top jaw and teeth, the bottom teeth respond by uprighting and slight space for crowding on the bottom is achieved as well.

how long?

Expanders are typically turned 1-2 turns per day at home for 3 weeks. Then Doctor will check and let you know if more turns are necessary. The expander will stay in place 6-12 months after turning to allow stabilization of the new position of teeth and bone.

care:

Modified eating habits are important during your orthodontic treatment. Use these rules as a guide. Hard and sticky foods may bend or break wires, loosen bands, or break brackets.

- Avoid: peanut brittle, nuts, popcorn (but you can have soft popped corn "pirates booty!"), nacho chips, corn chips, hard pizza crust, jolly ranchers, peppermints

- Avoid: sticky caramels and taffy, starburst, skittles, chewing gum - Raw carrots should be cooked until soft before eating

- Apples, corn on the cob, and ribs should all be cut into pieces before eating

- Stay away from biting non-food objects (pens, finger nails, and ice are not to be chewed!)

You should brush all parts of your appliance after eating. The more food that sits on your teeth and the longer it sits, the greater the risk for cavities!

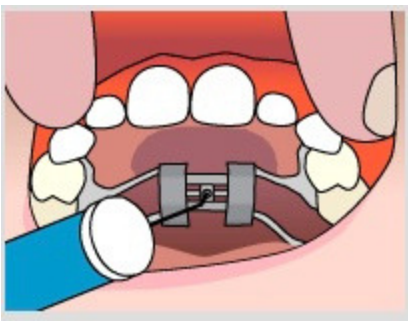
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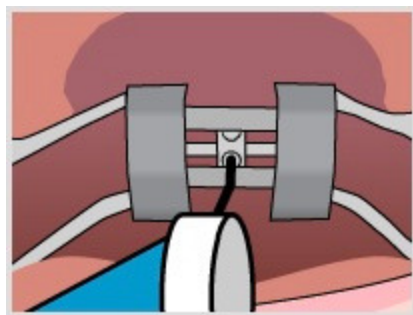
what to expect?

When the expander is first placed it is normal to feel soreness. Tylenol or ibuprofen can be taken to help with soreness. After each turn, slight pressure will be felt in the upper jaw or cheeks. The pressure should disappear after 15-20 minutes. It is not uncommon to have extra saliva in your mouth at first because your brain thinks this new appliance is food. Also speech may be affected at first as well. The more you sing, read aloud, and talk the faster your tongue will get used to the expander. Sometimes an indent can occur on the tongue and that will go away once the expander is removed. If the indent gets raw and sore, call us to evaluate. Otherwise wax can be applied to any area that is causing slight irritation. Occasionally the expander can come loose on one side. It will either come out all the way or just stay loose on the tooth, but either way call us to schedule a visit and eat a careful diet until you are able to come in. Sometimes Mom/Dad can push the band up back onto tooth temporarily until you are able to come in. Careful following of the diet recommendations can prevent such problems! Call us if you have any questions or experience any difficulties!

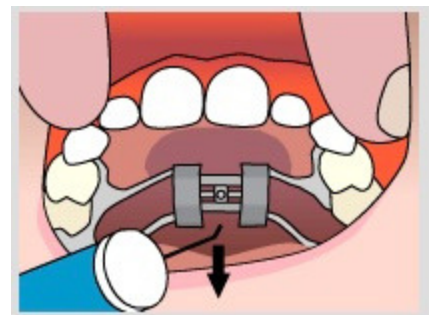
turning:



Tilt head back in well lit area.  
Insert key into visible hole until it feel firm.



Push key back towards the throat until it stops.  
As the screw rotates a new hole should appear at front.



Remove key by pressing back and pulling down towards the tongue.

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*bright smiling futures*

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