

Expanders

Some patients develop a narrow upper jaw resulting in a cross-bite (your upper teeth being inside of your lower teeth). Depending on the severity of the cross-bite, patients may have difficulty chewing properly. One approach to treating a cross-bite is the use of a maxillary expander. Used at the appropriate time when growth still remains, the expander allows the doctor to widen the upper jaw to its normal width.

How The Expander Works:

The upper jaw is composed of two halves that are connected by a fibrous connection called a suture. This suture turns into bone when growth is complete. The expander is used before this suture hardens into the bone and gently widens the upper jaw by moving the two halves apart.

The bone will then fill in the space in between.

How It Feels:

During expansion, you will feel pressure at the roof of your mouth as well as in the cheek bone area. The discomfort that you experience will last 1-3 days. Mild over-the-counter pain relieving medication such as Tylenol, Advil, or Motrin is very effective to make you comfortable. Chewing and speaking may be different during active expansion, but should return to normal within 1-2 weeks.

What You Will See:

During expansion, you will notice a broader more beautiful smile developing. A gap between the upper two front teeth usually occurs. The suture starts between the two front teeth and ends near your tonsils. A gap during expansion is a very good sign that the jaw is widening. This gap will naturally close most if not all the way after the expansion is complete. If it is not completely closed, we will place braces to close the remaining space.

Instructions:

- Place the key into the hole closest to the front teeth
- Push the key carefully towards the back of the throat until you see a new hole where you first started
- Take out the key by pushing the key downwards towards the tongue
- Do not eat anything sticky or hard for this may dislodge the expander

