

Expander

Many of our patients have a narrow upper jaw at the beginning of treatment. This affects the appearance when a person smiles and it also makes it difficult for the upper teeth to fit properly with the lower teeth. By widening the upper jaw it is possible to give the patient a broader, nicer smile and a better fit of the teeth for future lifetime benefits.

Widening of the upper jaw is accomplished with a sutural expansion appliance. Usually it takes a period of four to six weeks to obtain the necessary width correction. During this time, a space may open up between the upper front teeth that could be quite wide, occasionally up to the width of a pencil. After the expansion has been completed, these teeth will usually move together by themselves in two or three weeks during the resting period. This space opening is expected and normal, so do not be concerned. It is somewhat difficult the first two or three days to speak with the expander appliance in place. This is because the appliance goes across the width of the upper jaw and the screw portion occupies some of the space that the tongue would normally have for free movement. Speech improves after a short time and most patients will speak so well that it is difficult to detect that there is an appliance in place.

The construction of the appliance requires two appointments. The first appointment involves taking an upper and lower impression on which to construct the appliance. Approximately two weeks later, the appliance is bonded into place and the patient and parent are instructed on how to activate and properly care for the appliance.

Expansion patients are seen at 28 days to check the status of the appliance and the response to the force system. Should the appliance become loose on one or more teeth stop the activation of the appliance and call our office for assistance. When sufficient width is obtained, activation is terminated and the appliance is left in place for 8 weeks. After this resting period, the appliance is removed and a retainer is placed. It is critical that this retainer be worn so that it is not necessary to re-expand the upper jaw. Sutural expansion is a very interesting and a rather dramatic procedure that works well. We are certain you will be gratified by the response and the eventual result. Your cooperation is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ron Snyder and Staff

