

Dr. Shelley Lalani

Information about the:

BANDED EXPANDER APPLIANCE

Description:

The fixed expansion appliance is used to widen the upper jaw and dental arch in order to improve the bite, and/or create more space for crowded teeth.

Wear:

Since the appliance is glued to the upper teeth, it is worn 24 hours a day. The length of time that the expander is in place varies from patient to patient. The “average” length of time is 3-4 months.

Activation:

The expander is activated by turning the inner screw with a key. Your appliance is to be turned _____ per day for _____ days. Please DO NOT turn the screw more than we instruct you to. If you have trouble getting the key into the screw don't panic. Just give our office a call and we will help get the screw turning again.

Comfort:

Upon activation most patients notice pressure in the upper jaw, teeth and sometimes nose areas that can last from 5-15 minutes. There are some metal attachments at the sides of the some expanders that may initially irritate the inside of the cheeks. Soft wax will be given to you to press over this area while your mouth is adapting, this should be placed each night for the first few nights to cushion these areas. Warm salt water rinses can also help with cheek irritation (1/4 tsp of salt in 1/2 cup of warm water).

Eating:

Initially there will be some awkwardness in eating and swallowing, but this soon goes away. For the first few days stick to soft foods and liquids (eggs, yogurt, pasta, mashed potatoes etc.) Chewing small pieces of food is also helpful at first. Any foods that are hard and crunchy or sticky must be avoided.

Speech:

Your expander can interfere with making certain sounds for the first few days. Reading out loud for 10-15 minutes each night helps adapt to speaking with the expander in place.

Cleaning:

It is very important to keep you appliance very clean. Food, plaque and tartar can build up on the edges so we recommend that you scrub it with your toothbrush and toothpaste after meals and before you go to bed. Remember to keep the edges clean to prevent your gum tissue from swelling and becoming sore. Also remember to scrub the expansion screw prior to turning the key as it will make the key-hole easier to see.

Helpful Hints:

- A space usually develops between the upper two front teeth-this is NORMAL
- If the appliance becomes loose call our office and DO NOT turn it anymore
- After the activation phase is complete you may notice that the two front teeth move back together within 3-5 weeks-this is NORMAL.
- When turning the expansion screw make sure that you have good lighting and can see the key hole easily.

Success of the Expander:

When patients follow our guidelines excellent results are achievable. Surgery, along with the expander, is necessary for nongrowing patients.

