

## **Expander Instructions**

### **HOW DO I INSERT IT?**

The appliance is generally inserted first on one side and then pivoted to insert on the other side. It should be inserted with thumb or finger pressure on the plastic in the area of the clasps with an upward and outward push that helps the clasp on each side slide over the tooth. A scratching sound as the appliance is inserted signals a nice tight fit of the clasp that will assure the appliance stays in place. It should always fit to the roof of the mouth and be very difficult to remove when it is properly in place. **It should not be inserted by biting it into place.** Doing so may result in bending or breaking of the metal clasps that hold it in place. It should be removed only for cleaning. Removal is generally best done with a very fast motion that causes the clasp to flex quickly so the appliance comes out easily with no damage to the appliance and little or no discomfort to you.

### **HOW DO I EAT WITH IT IN PLACE?**

The appliance should be in place when eating and removed only to clean. Each chewing stroke helps push the appliance in place. This only enhances the effectiveness of the expander. We advise the first few meals be food you like which is soft and really would not require teeth to eat. Swallowing may be difficult initially, but becomes easy with time and practice. In time you will eat very well with the appliance in place.

### **HOW OFTEN DO I ACTIVATE IT?**

The appliance is activated once every 4 days by inserting the small metal key into the hole in the expansion screw and turning it 1 turn (90degrees). This results in a very slight sense of tightness as the appliance is reinserted into the roof of the mouth. This expansion rate is very important and should not be accelerated. In fact, if the appliance does not seat to the roof of the mouth, back the screw off a little bit until it seats and resume the normal activation schedule.

### **HOW CAN I TALK WITH IT IN MY MOUTH?**

Speech may be challenging initially but rapidly improves with practice. We strongly advise slowing your speech a bit initially and reading out loud for 20 minutes every evening until you become totally used to talking with the appliance.

### **WHAT IF I GET A SORE ON THE ROOF OF MY MOUTH?**

Occasionally, as the teeth move, the plastic part of the appliance will dig into the roof of the mouth a bit and make a sore. There may be some discomfort and swelling of the tissue involved. A small ridge of gum tissue is normal on the palate where the acrylic ends. This is nothing to worry about. It will go away very quickly when we are through with this part of the treatment. If a sore does develop please feel free to use the coarse side of an emery board to remove a small amount of the plastic or call the office for an adjustment. Keep the appliance in the mouth, but stop activating the appliance if a sore occurs. When the sore heals up a bit, resume your activations.

### **HOW DO I CLEAN IT?**

The appliance is cleaned with cold water, toothpaste, and a toothbrush when you brush your teeth. Keeping the appliance clean cuts down on sores on the roof of the mouth.

### **HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO WEAR IT?**

Properly worn and activated most patients will wear this appliance between 4 and 6 months. Improper wear or activation may increase that time dramatically.

### **REASONS FOR A CALL TO THE OFFICE:**

A sore in the roof of the mouth that you cannot fix with an emery board or an appliance that does not stay up to the roof of the mouth properly are reasons to call our office.

**REMEMBER: THE EXPANDER SHOULD BE WORN ALL THE TIME EXCEPT WHEN BRUSHING YOUR TEETH AND CLEANING THE APPLIANCE!**

