

\_\_\_\_\_ TURNS PER DAY FOR \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS

# Palatal Expansion

When the upper arch is too narrow to fit properly with the lower arch, expansion of the upper arch is often indicated. In many cases, the most stable way to accomplish the expansion is by applying orthodontic force to the upper arch to achieve skeletal rather than dental expansion. The upper jaw bone in growing patients has growth centers called sutures which are soft cartilage. The mid-palatal suture separates the roof of the mouth into left and right halves. When pressure is applied in a controlled manner, the mid-palatal suture can be significantly widened correcting crossbites and creating more room for the eruption and alignment of teeth.

The appliance used to expand the maxilla is called a **Rapid Palatal Expander (RPE)**. This appliance is custom made for each patient. It is activated at home by the parents of the younger patients or the older patients themselves. Expansion of the upper arch is accomplished in 2 to 4 weeks. The appliances remains in the mouth for approximately 3 to 4 months to hold the expansion while new bone formation takes place.

## WHAT TO EXPECT:

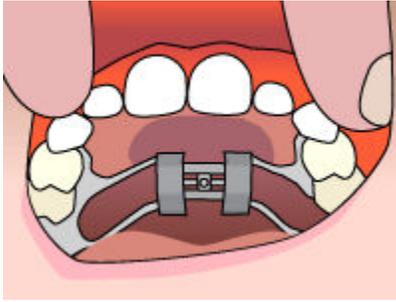
- \* The back teeth may be uncomfortable for 48 to 72 hours after placing the RPE.
- \* Swallowing may be awkward for several days because of the room that the appliance occupies in the roof of the mouth. Speech may also be affected for the same reason. Most children adapt and compensate within a day or two.
- \* A significant space may develop between the two upper front teeth. This is temporary and will usually begin to close automatically when the RPE is no longer being activated.
- \* After the initial adjustment period, when the RPE is activated, the patient may feel pressure for a short time but there should be little, if any, discomfort.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACTIVATING THE PALATAL EXPANDER:

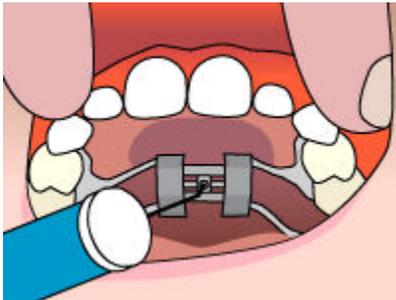
- \* Have the patient open his/her mouth as wide as possible.
- \* Place the key in the hole located near the center of the appliance.
- \* Push the key towards the back of the mouth until it stops and a new hole appears.
- \* Repeat the steps above to complete a second turn if prescribed.
- \* Dr. Eppard will prescribe how many turns each day and when to stop activating.
- \* Avoid eating hard or chewy candy, do not chew ice, and do not play with the RPE with your tongue or fingers.
- \* Please call the office if you have any problems or concerns.

**Questions?? Call Eppard Orthodontics (540) 825-6064**

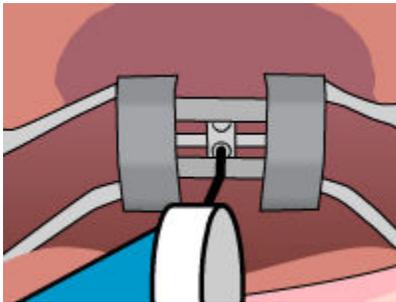
Step 1 In a well-lit area tip the patient's head back.



Step 2 Place the key in the hole until it is firmly in place.



Step 3 Pushing the key towards the back of the mouth, you will notice the fender will rotate and the new hole will appear. The rotation stops when the key meets the back of the expander.



Step 4 By pushing back and down towards the tongue, remove the key. The next hole for insertion of the key should now be visible.

