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Rapid Palatal Expander (Hydrax) Instructions

Today we cemented your child's rapid palatal expander. This expander is designed to widen the palate and correct your child's crossbite and provide space for future tooth eruption. Here are a few helpful tips for home:

The appliance is cemented onto your child's teeth with special cement. It should stay on for the duration of treatment. However, if the appliance should loosen up, please call us immediately so that we may recement it.

1. The appliance will need to be turned once a day for approximately a month. We will check periodically to ensure that the expansion is proceeding as planned. After the crossbite is corrected and we lock the expansion of the appliance, your child will continue to wear it without any further turning for an additional 4-6 months. It may be replaced with a removable retainer.
2. Your child will need a few days to get used to the feel of the hyrax. It may feel tight and uncomfortable at first. When your child talks, his/her speech may sound slurred for a couple of days. Don't worry! Speech will return to normal in a matter of days. After you turn the key, your child may feel some pressure against the teeth or in the roof of the mouth that may last a couple of minutes. This discomfort will disappear after about a week; if necessary you can take whatever you usually take for a headache (Ibuprofen, or Tylenol).
3. When turning the appliance with the key, make sure you turn it completely. If you don't, you'll be unable to place a key in the slot the next day. We'll show you how to turn it if this happens. If you still can't fit the key into the slot, give us a call. Clean the key after each use with warm soapy water.
4. Food can get caught between the appliance and the roof of the mouth. Make sure your child rinses thoroughly after eating and brushes and flosses at least twice a day, especially around the bands. We don't want cavities!
5. By about the second week of turning, your child may develop a large space between the two front teeth. This space will return to normal over the next few months.
6. Your child should avoid sticky foods, chewing gum, and sticky candy. Chop large pieces of food such as pizza or meat into smaller bite size pieces. Chewing anything sticky can loosen the appliance and lengthen the duration of treatment.

Your cooperation is important to the success of this treatment.