YOUR PALATE EXPANDER

You're probably feeling somewhat strange with this new appliance inside your mouth, but take a few minutes to read this list of helpful suggestions so that your experience can be a comfortable as possible.

➢ Your palate expander is designed to widen your upper jaw using the screw mechanism in the middle of the appliance. Please turn the screw daily, preferably at the same time each day. Lying in a prone position and having a good light source will make finding the keyway a lot easier. Remember, the screw must be turned completely so that the next turn can be accomplished. Immediately after turning the screw, there should be a feeling of tightness that lasts anywhere from five to twenty minutes. If there is ever a feeling of discomfort or pain, stop turning and call the office.

➢ It will take a couple of days to become accustomed to speaking with this appliance, mainly because it occupies an area in your mouth that is usually reserved for the tongue. The more you talk, the faster you will learn to speak with it. Reading out loud is a helpful way of practicing to speak.

➢ The first meal with the palate expander can be a challenge. It is suggested that this meal not be taken in public. Start with soft foods and work your way up; there is really no limit to what you can eat, except very hard foods like ice or hard candy. Sticky things like taffy, caramels, gummy bears and fruit roll-ups can loosen the cement that holds the palate expander on your teeth. Gum will stick to the plastic part. You will notice that food gets stuck in different parts of the expander when you eat anything. It's probably a good idea to eat your whole meal before you try to clean it. Your toothbrush and a waterpik are the only appropriate tools to clean the palate expander. A toothpick, fork, or anything else that's hard could cause injury if you slip. You can also try swishing water through it, sometimes this works.

➢ As the palate expander widens your jaw, you might notice that your bite changes. This is quite normal.