

# Expanders

When the upper arch is narrower than the lower arch (i.e., cross bite) or when there is a need for more room to accommodate the upper teeth, an Expander is often prescribed. Metal rings, are fitted to your molars and a 3D scan is taken to generate a model of your teeth. The bands and model are then sent to a lab and the Expander is fabricated. We cement the device to your molars at the following appointment.

## What to Expect

Activating the Expander will not hurt, but your teeth may be uncomfortable for 1 – 2 days. Tylenol is quite effective for this type of discomfort. Sometimes, a few days after the Expander is cemented into your mouth, you may feel a slight “stretching” sensation in the roof of your mouth. This is OK and to be expected. The fibers there are expanding. Your palate is joined in the middle by a joint which can comfortably separate and spread under the gums. Once this has happened, the area fills in with new bone and the jaw is wider. You may get a space between your two front teeth for a short time. This gap will slowly close by itself.

## Turning Instructions

The Expander is activated by the use of a small “key” to complete the turns. The Expander must be turned according to the schedule set by Dr. Cohen. Place the “key” inside the small hole in the center of your expander and push the key toward the back of the throat. This will expose the next hole to be used at the next turning. Once the palate has been widened enough, it is necessary to hold it so new bone can fill the space.

## Care Instructions

Brush as usual. Use water to flush out any food caught between the Expander and roof of your mouth.

Dr. Cohen and his team want you to know that having an Expander doesn't mean you have to give up all your favourite foods. However, eating some of the following items can break or loosen your appliance which may increase the time with your Expander. Food can get stuck between your palate and the expander, rinse well with water or use your toothbrush to push it out.

## **Foods to Avoid (Anything Sticky or Chewy)**

Ice, Snickers, Taffy, Caramels, Rolos, Twizzlers, Starbursts, Tootsie Rolls, Fruit Roll-Ups, Skittles, Lollipops, Peanut Brittle, Candy Canes, Bubble Gum, Jolly Ranchers

If a band becomes loose or if your Expander is broken, please call the office as soon as possible. Fixing broken appliances or replacing them takes extra time that your regular scheduled appointment may not offer.