



Burkhardt • Pecora
orthodontics

BONDED EXPANDER REMOVAL

We have just removed the bonded rapid palatal expansion appliance from the upper arch of your child's teeth. You will notice that the tissue surrounding the teeth in the posterior part of the mouth may be red and irritated and may initially bleed easily. This is the usual occurrence following expander removal. In most instances, the irritation will disappear within a week.

There are two methods of retention commonly used. In the first method of retention, the expander that was worn by your child will be cleaned and trimmed and returned to the child to wear, either to continue expansion (one turn each week), or until he or she receives the maintenance plate.

The second method is called a **maintenance plate**. The plate is used to maintain the expansion that was achieved through the use of the expander. You will notice that there are a number of metal clasps attached to the appliance. These clasps may break off during normal wear. This is only of concern if your child cannot continue to wear the retainer in the same manner. If the clasps break and the child is unable to wear the retainer, please call our office immediately.

The maintenance plate and removable bonded expander should be worn **all of the time**, except when brushing. Many children find it easier to leave the plate or expander in the mouth during meals rather than remove it. Hard and sticky foods should be avoided in this case. If your child takes it out to eat, care must be taken to replace it immediately after the meal. It is recommended to leave the plate in to eat at school, but it may be taken out to eat at home.

Any time the maintenance plate or bonded expander is taken out of the mouth, it should be placed in a container to prevent loss or damage. At home, it is usually convenient to identify one place (for example, in the kitchen) where the appliance is put after taking it out of the mouth. A dish or cup on the kitchen counter is often ideal.

Because your child has had a fixed appliance, it may take some time to get adjusted to the sensation of a removable appliance. It is usually quite easy to "click" the appliance around the mouth with the tongue, or to continually take it in and out to play with it. This should be discouraged. It is best to put the expander in and leave it alone until it is time to take it out. With this practice, your child should feel comfortable with it in a short time.

Care for both the plate and the expander is the same. Both the removable expander and the maintenance plate should be worn at all times except when brushing the teeth. Both appliances should be cleaned after each meal (or run under water to remove food particles) and at bedtime. Either toothpaste or denture cleaner can be used to maintain the cleanliness of the appliance. Keep all appliances away from heat (which will melt or warp the plastic) and dogs. (It is common for dogs to be attracted to the smell and chew on the appliance.)

The biggest problem with wearing any removable appliance is losing the appliance. Make sure that your child does not wrap the plate or expander in a napkin when eating at restaurants or at school. Very often, the napkin is thrown away, and with it, the maintenance plate. If a replacement plate is indicated, an additional impression will be needed, as the cast is destroyed in the fabrication process when making any retainer. There is a replacement charge for any lost maintenance plate.

If your child has any difficulty in wearing either the removable expander or the maintenance plate, please contact our office immediately. Otherwise, some loss of the expansion that was gained during the first part of treatment may occur.

Please contact our office if you have any questions, and we will be happy to help you.