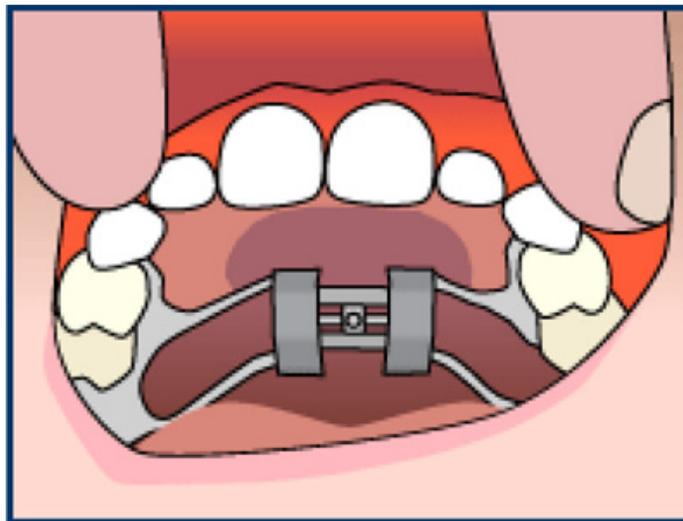


## **PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS – RAPID PALATAL EXPANSION (RPE)**

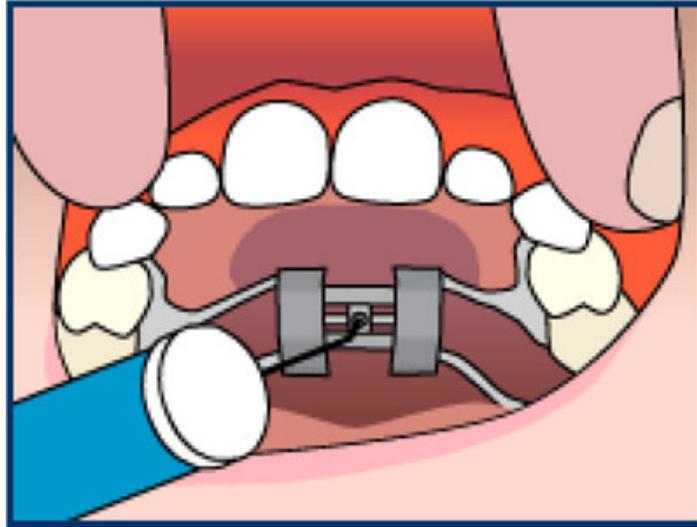
Orthodontic expansion is indicated to correct a narrow upper jaw and provide long term stability to orthodontic treatment. Not every patient is a candidate for expansion. For those that are, rapid palatal expanders develop more room in the dental arch, alleviate crowding, and correct constricted upper arches.

Gentle incremental pressure is applied when the appliance is turned. If an expander is used with your treatment plan, we will review when and how to turn the appliance. After active expansion is complete, the appliance will remain in for a period of time to stabilize the expansion.

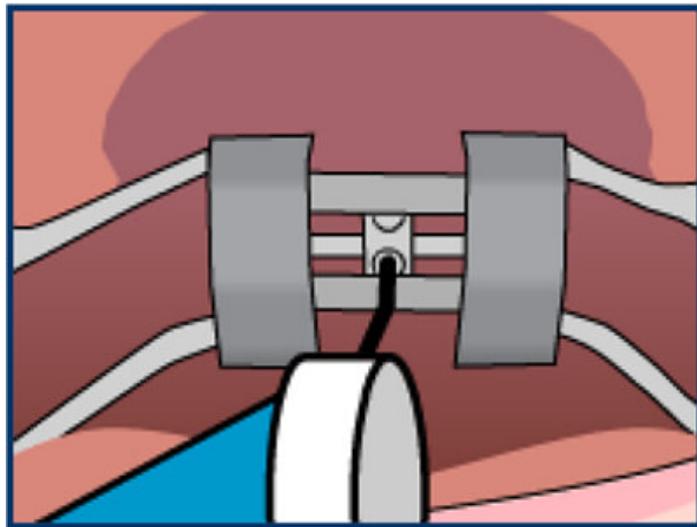
**Step 1** In a well-lit area tip the patient's head back.



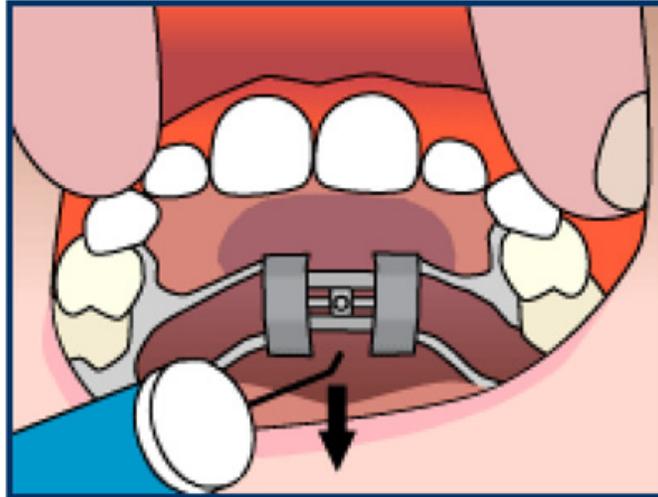
Step 2. Place the key in the hole until it is firmly in place.



Step 3. Pushing the key towards the back of the mouth, you will notice the screw 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.



### Hygiene

Brush the appliance including the metal bars & screw in the same way you brush your teeth. When you are unable to brush after eating, use water swished around in your mouth to help dislodge any food particles. Must keep the expander and its parts clean and free of food. You should also use a Waterpik. Warm salt water rinses and use Orajel/Brace Relief gel if you have gum soreness.

### What can I eat?

At first, eating will be more difficult; take small bites & eat soft foods until this is overcome (usually a few days to a week). After that, you should be able to eat almost everything you did before with some exceptions. Mainly sticky, hard, and crunchy foods. –Popcorn, ice, nuts, candy, and gum.

## You will notice several things as the expander does its job.

### **Speech**

Your speech will be slightly affected at first. This is not permanent & the best way to get used to this is to speak aloud as much as possible; try reading out loud or singing.

### **Soreness**

Your teeth may be sore for the first few days. To help with this you may want to take what you would normally take for a headache; however, chewing & talking are the best ways to get your mouth used to this new feeling.

**Pressure or tingling** of the mouth, tongue, cheeks & nose; your bite will feel off as the width of your palate changes and the palate expands. The teeth may not fit together properly, this is normal, for now.

### **Space between your front teeth**

Although this is a good sign from the standpoint of your treatment, it can be disheartening from a cosmetic point of view. By the time you stop turning the expander, the space may look large enough to fit another tooth. This space is good and will close by itself or with braces within a short time.

### **Potential Trouble and Problems**

Please turn the appliance as instructed. Do not do more turns than directed and stop after the directed number of weeks and turns.

At your next appointment, you will be told if your expansion is completed or needs to continue. The most common problem we see with the RPE is an incomplete activation where the key cannot be seated for the next activation. You should see the next hole completely in the RPE when the key is removed.

If the RPE ever feels loose or wiggly, the bands should be cemented and not moving on the teeth, please call to have the appliance re-cemented. You should carefully follow the food list and avoid sticky, hard foods.

If the silver wires on the side look like they are in the gums Please know that the gums respond to the wires by overgrowing, especially if the are is not kept clean. Use warm Salt water rinses, Orajel, keep the area clean and give it some time.

**\*\*If the appliance comes out completely, please bring it with you to your appointment.**