



**NATIONWIDE
CHILDREN'S**

When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

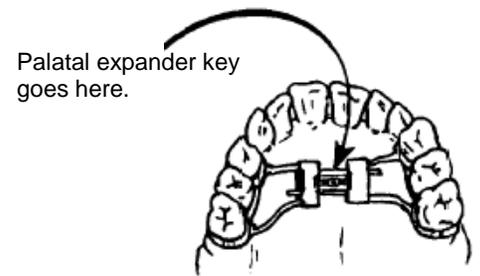
Dental: Wearing a Palatal Expander

The roof of the mouth is called a palate. The palatal expander (PAL uh tuhl ex PAN der) is a dental appliance used to widen the roof of the mouth (**Picture 1**). It expands the palate to make room for crowded teeth.

Caring for your teeth and gums

Keeping your teeth and gums clean and your appliance clean will be your most important jobs while you wear the palatal expander. These things are important because:

- Clean teeth and gums prevent tooth decay.
- Puffy, un-brushed gums can grow over the bands and slow tooth movement. This can increase the length of time you have your braces on.
- A dirty mouth leads to unhealthy gums that can become swollen, infected and sore.
- Please read and follow instructions in Helping Hand HH-IV-56, *Dental: Brushing with Braces*.



Picture 1 The palatal expander inside the mouth.

Adjusting the palatal expander

- After the palatal expander has been seated (put in place in your mouth), it is adjusted by turning the key in the direction of the arrow, by you or your parent.
- Turn your palatal expander twice a day, once in the morning and once at night. At each turn you will see a new keyhole appear. If you do not see the keyhole, the turn is not complete.
- Since the palatal expander is moving the bone, you will feel some pressure below the eyes and at the top of your nose between the eyes. A pain reliever of your choice may be used to relieve this pressure. Follow the directions on the bottle. **Caution:** Never place aspirin on the gums to relieve pain because it will burn the tissue.
- If discomfort continues, do not turn the palatal expander any more that day. Then start turning the expander on the next day. However, be sure you have completed the required number of turns before your next appointment.
- As the treatment continues a space will open between your front teeth. **Do not be alarmed. This is normal.**

Palatal expander chart

This palatal expander chart is a guide or calendar to keep track of how many turns you have made in the expander. Starting on the day the appliance is put on, turn the expander twice a day as instructed. Each time you make the turns, mark it on the chart. For example, the following chart shows you how your calendar will look as you record the turns. (In this example, there were 2 turns on Monday, 2 on Tuesday, 1 on Wednesday, 3 on Thursday and so on.) Please bring the completed chart with you to your next appointment.

Example

T	4																					
U	3				x																	
R	2	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
N	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
S		M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S

Day of Week

Your Personal Chart

T	4																					
U	3																					
R	2																					
N	1																					
S		M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S

Day of Week

Nutrition

- Eat healthy foods every day. Include lots of fruits and vegetables, along with meat, milk and whole grain bread.
- Do not eat sticky or chewy foods such as gum, taffy, caramels or licorice.
- Do not eat hard foods like ice, nuts or popcorn.
- Whole raw carrots, celery and apples should be cut into bite-size pieces.

If you have any questions about your palatal expander, be sure to ask your dentist or dental assistant or call _____.