Dental: Wearing Headgear

Headgear is an orthodontic appliance worn to move teeth or jaw bones back, so the front teeth do not protrude (stick out). The headgear is also worn to hold back the forward growth of the upper jaw to give the lower jaw time to grow and catch up.

The headgear has 3 parts: the wire face bow, the elastic strap and the neck pad. The wire face bow has an outer wire bow that is on the outside of the mouth. This is attached to a smaller wire bow worn on the inside of the mouth. Both ends of the outside wire bow are connected to a padded elastic strap, which is worn behind the head and neck (Picture 1). The wire face bow is worn by sliding the ends of the inside bow through 2 tubes. These tubes are on the bands that are cemented onto your child’s 6-year molar teeth.

Wearing Dental Headgear

- Your child will feel some pressure or discomfort during the first week after he gets his headgear. This is because his teeth are moving. After that, he will not feel pressure or discomfort unless he does not wear his headgear daily.

- It is very important for your child to wear the headgear at least 12 to 14 hours a day, or as instructed by the dentist. The amount of time he wears it will determine how many months he will have to wear his headgear.

- If he wears it faithfully for one full week and then misses one evening, that one evening will set him back one whole week (7 days). So, see that he wears his headgear every day.

- Your child needs to wear his headgear while watching television, doing homework, after school and while sleeping. He cannot wear it "too much."

- When removing the headgear, your child should remove the elastic strap first by unhooking the strap from the outer bow. This protects his eyes as well as the appliance.

- Teach your child to keep his teeth well-brushed and flossed. This is very important to prevent cavities.
Cautions

- When your child puts on the headgear, he should not force it on.
- Neither you nor your child should adjust the strap yourselves. The dentist will adjust it at your child’s regular visits.
- Your child should not wear his headgear during contact sports or any other activity where someone might grab the headgear.

Cleaning the Headgear

- Your child needs to rinse the face bow with warm, clear water every day.
- Make sure that your child keeps the neck strap and pad clean. Wash the neck pad in a mild detergent. Rinse thoroughly with clear water, then dry.

Appointments with the Dentist

- The doctor will adjust your child’s strap and headgear at each visit.
- **Bring your child’s headgear every time** you take him to see the dentist.
- Dental appointments will be every 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the movement of your child’s teeth.

If you have any other questions about the headgear, be sure to ask your dentist or dental assistant, or call ____________________________.