



Burkhardt • Pecora orthodontics

MAINTENANCE PLATE

We recently removed the palatal expansion appliance from the upper arch of your child's mouth. After the expander is removed, there may be some redness and slight bleeding. This is a usual occurrence, which is not of major concern and will heal within a few days.

Your child has been given a plastic plate with clasps that attach to the upper arch. The purpose of this plate is to maintain the expansion achieved through the use of the expander. The plate **must be worn at all times** except when brushing. We encourage the patient to wear the appliance when eating, particularly at school, as this decreases the chance of loss. At home, the appliance may be removed for meals, then replaced immediately afterwards. Hard and sticky foods should be avoided when wearing this appliance. The plate should be removed when swimming in a lake or ocean, but it is okay to leave it in when swimming in a pool.

Anytime the plate is taken out of the mouth, it should be placed in a container to prevent loss or damage, and then placed in a safe place. **The biggest challenge with wearing any removable appliance is the possibility of misplacing the appliance. Make sure that your child does not wrap the plate in a napkin when eating at a restaurant or at school. Very often the napkin is thrown away with the retainer. Should this happen, there will be an additional charge for the replacement plate.** Also, an additional impression is needed as dental casts are damaged when making the appliances and cannot be reused.

As the plate is worn, occasionally one or more of the metal clasps break off. 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 or it is uncomfortable, please call our office immediately.

The appliance should be cleaned after each meal and at bedtime with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Do not use hot water as this will warp or melt the retainer. Don't put the appliance in the dishwasher to clean it. **Be sure to keep all dental appliances away from dogs, as they will use it as a chew toy.**

Please contact us immediately if your child has any difficulty wearing the retainer. If the child does not wear the retainer as directed, there may be some loss of the expansion that was gained during treatment. If a significant amount of expansion is lost after not wearing the maintenance plate, another maxillary expander may be needed with the braces.

If your child had front "temporary" braces that were recently removed, please note that some shifting of these teeth may occur. This is a normal occurrence that can happen as the other permanent teeth come into the mouth. If this movement seems excessive, please contact our office and we would be happy to check your child.

The maintenance plate will be worn on a full-time basis for approximately six to twelve months and then on a night time-only basis for a period of time thereafter to maintain the expansion achieved as permanent teeth erupt. It is beneficial to leave the plate out of the mouth to eat one meal per day, preferably dinner at home, to keep the tissue on the roof of the mouth "toughened up." This will make the transition to nighttime wear easier.