HAMILTON ORTHODONTICS

Expander Care and Instructions

The purpose of an expander is to expand the palate. This is a painless procedure done gradually over time. Each turn of the key creates expansion equivalent to the size of a pencil point, though the actual movement of the key makes it appear larger.

The expander is cemented into the mouth, covering the back teeth. It is important to brush the appliance as you would brush your teeth, paying close attention to the ledge beside your gums. Also, **brush your tongue** so that it stays clean and will not become sensitive.

What to expect: The expander feels a little bulky at first. You may find that you salivate more. This happens because your brain thinks the appliance is food. Chewing will be more difficult because you only have your bottom teeth to grind up the food against the smooth surface of the expander. It is also not unusual for your front teeth not to touch. You may have to break up foods, such as sandwiches, that you would ordinarily bite into. We recommend that you take smaller bites of food than usual and drink a beverage to help with swallowing.

As happens with any new appliance in the mouth, your speech may be temporarily altered. Practice talking by reading aloud. Everybody has to get used to the expander, but you should feel only mild soreness from the expander. If you do feel strong discomfort, discontinue cranking, keep the appliance as clean as possible, and call our office. If the expander feels loose, follow the same procedure.

A space may appear between your front teeth during the weeks of activation. The teeth will return to their original position once activation is discontinued.

Please note: The expander will be in place approximately six months. Some patients may wear the hyrax longer (one month of activation + five months or more for stabilization).

Review of the activation procedure: In a well-lit area, tip head back and insert the key into the hole. Push the key back towards the back of the throat (this is a front-to-back motion of the key, not a turn), until you cannot move the key any further. A new hole should appear in the place of the old one. Now remove the key by pulling it down straight towards the tongue. Do not pull the key forward again to remove it or you will undo the activation. If you cannot get the key into the hole, you may not have completed the previous turn. To correct, find the last hold you were in and complete the turn towards the back of the mouth. *Only activate the expander one time a day unless instructed by the doctor. If you have to cancel your appointment, stop activation the day of your appointment until you are checked.*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday