

Palatal Expanders

Dr. Sherif Elhady may recommend a palatal expander if your upper jaw is too narrow. This oral appliance works to gradually widen your jaw so that your teeth have enough space to erupt and align properly, minimizing your risk of extraction.

When you visit Trü Orthodontics, our orthodontists will analyze your bite and the alignment of your jaw to determine if a palatal expander is a good option for you. In many cases, adjustments to your bite may be needed in order to reach a functional bite and a properly aligned smile. Palatal expanders are one of several options for doing this, stretching the soft cartilage of the palate to make room for crowded permanent teeth. Depending on your individual needs and oral health, your palatal expander may be fixed or removable.

Adjusting Your Palatal Expander

- When you receive your palatal expander, our team will provide you with a “key,” which is a tool that allows you to adjust the pressure of your expander.
- Insert the key into the hole, and press towards the back of the mouth to rotate the fender as far back as it will go. This should reveal a new hole for the next adjustment.
- Please DO NOT turn the key toward the front of the mouth, as this is counter-productive to your goals and could damage the device or your teeth.
- Be sure to follow the adjustment schedule laid out by our orthodontists. Turning the key too many times too soon can cause severe discomfort and damage, whereas turning it too little will not give you the results necessary for your treatment.
- A bit of tightness and discomfort after turning is completely normal. If needed, take some Advil or TYLENOL®.
- You might notice that a big space is opening up between your upper front teeth as treatment continues. This is normal and means that the expander is doing its job! Once you have stopped using the expander, this space should close naturally in a matter of weeks.

If Your Palatal Expander Is Detached

If you notice that your expander has become detached, either fully or partially, stop turning the key and do your best to keep the appliance in place. Call our office as soon as you can to get the appliance repaired so that your treatment can progress as normal.

Foods To Avoid If You Have A Fixed Expander

- Sticky foods, like taffy, caramel, starbursts, gum and others.
- Hard and crunchy foods, like popcorn, nuts, hard candies and more.
- Though this is generally discouraged even if you do not have an expander, it is even more important during treatment that you not chew on pens, pencils, fingernails, ice or other hard, non-food items.

We invite you to call us to schedule an appointment with our orthodontists and learn more about the benefits of palatal expanders in Burke, Fairfax, Gainesville and Herndon, Virginia.