

Rapid Palatal Expander

Mischler Orthodontics

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What is a palatal expander?

A rapid palatal expander (sometimes called RPE) fits in the roof of the mouth (palate) and accomplishes the following:

- Widens the upper jaw to create room for erupting permanent teeth
- Improves upper and lower jaw alignment due to a constricted upper arch

How long will my expander be in place?

The length of time you turn your expander or wear your expander depends on our treatment goals for you. Most patients have their expander in place for approximately 6 months.

What to expect:

The palatal expander may take a few days to get used to. Here is what to expect:

- **SWALLOWING** - Swallowing may feel different because your tongue is not used to having the expander in its space.
- **SORENESS** - The mouth or nose may be sore or tingly, or there may be a slight headache. Over-the-counter pain relievers can help ease any discomfort.
- **SPEECH** - Your speech will be temporarily affected and you may have a slight lisp as you're adjusting to your expander.
- **SPACES** - You may develop spaces between the front teeth. That's a sign that the expander is working. The teeth will later shift to fill in the spaces by themselves or with braces.
- **SALIVA** - There may be excess saliva for a few days as you're adjusting to your expander.

Caring for your expander

It is important to keep the palatal expander clean. Swish water around in the mouth after eating or after drinking sugary soda or juice. When brushing the teeth, the expander should be brushed too.

Turning your expander

Activation is done with a small metal key. It may be tricky in the beginning, but it will soon be very easy and only take a moment.

- In a well-lit area, firmly grip the blue key. Insert the key carefully into the hole in the middle front part of the expander.

Push the key gently and steadily from the front toward the back of the mouth.

- You should feel some resistance while turning it. You will notice that the next hole will rotate into position as you complete your turn. Remove the key by pushing it toward the throat out of the hole.

Frequency of Turns:

Turn your expander as instructed. Put a mark under each day to record your turns. Bring this sheet with you to your appointments.

