

## Space Maintainer Instructions

We have recommended and placed a space maintainer(s) in your child's mouth to either maintain the space for erupting permanent teeth or to maintain the current position of already erupted permanent teeth. Without this space maintainer your child's teeth may have difficulty in erupting or staying in their proper position. We want to provide you with some information which will allow you to care for your child's space maintainer in the best manner possible.

**Diet:** All of our space maintainers are cemented with strong dental cement; however, the space maintainer still can be dislodged if the wrong types of food are eaten. We do not recommend that your child eat any of the following: caramels, taffy, hard candy, chewing gum (any type), gummy bears, jolly ranchers, ice cubes, hard crunchy foods, or any sticky, chewy food. Sugary foods should be kept to a minimum.

**Oral Hygiene:** While almost all of our space maintainer designs are easy to clean, your child must have above average oral hygiene. Space maintainers will catch extra food debris and plaque, so your child will have to make an extra effort in brushing and flossing to maintain healthy gums and teeth.

**Periodic Evaluation:** Patients with space maintainers should be seen by the dentist at a minimum of every 6 months for routine examination for evaluation of the bite, fit of the bands, and tooth eruption. Failure to return for follow-up visits can lead to gum problems, cavities, and crooked teeth. Once the space maintainer is ready for removal the dentist will remove it.

**Patient Cooperation:** *The space maintainer is not a toy.* Do not "flip" the appliance with the tongue, because it may loosen the fit. Do not pick at the wires or bands with fingers.

**Loose Space Maintainer:** Should the space maintainer come loose for whatever the reason, call the office immediately. If the space maintainer is loose enough to come out of the mouth, place it in an envelope, store it in a safe place, then call the office immediately. Many times, a loose space maintainer can be easily re-cemented if the appliance has not been bent or broken and your child is seen as soon as possible. A delay in getting in for an appointment could cause the need for the space maintainer to be remade.

**Patient Comfort:** Space maintainers are a passive (they do not move teeth) appliance, therefore, there should not be any pain or discomfort associated with space maintainer. Pain or discomfort could be an indication that something is wrong with the space maintainer. Call the office if your child has any pain or discomfort associated with the space maintainer. With a new space maintainer there may be an initial accommodation period of a few days to a week. During this time there may be an initial difficulty in speech and the appliance's presence will be noted. Usually, after this time the space maintainer is hardly noticed.