



ALL ABOUT YOUR PALATAL EXPANDER (RPE)



APPOINTMENTS TO GET STARTED (USUALLY ^{but not always} 1 WEEK APART)

1. SEPARATOR PLACEMENT (ABOUT 10-15 MINUTES)

DO

- Brush well around the separators
- Call our office if they fall out before your next appointment



DON'T

- Floss around the separators
- Eat sticky, chewy foods, popcorn, or pick at them
- Leave in for extended periods of time without monitoring

2. TAKING RECORDS, FITTING BANDS AND TAKING THE IMPRESSION (ABOUT 40 MINUTES)



When we remove the separators, space is now present for us to custom fit the bands



After fitting the bands, An impression of the teeth and palate is taken then sent to the lab for fabrication of the RPE. We will replace the separators to keep space for placing the expander

3. DELIVERING THE RPE, REVIEWING INSTRUCTIONS, AND PRACTICING TURNING (ABOUT 40 MINUTES)

- We will fit the expander and adjust as needed.
- The expander is then cemented with an adhesive that protects the tooth underneath.



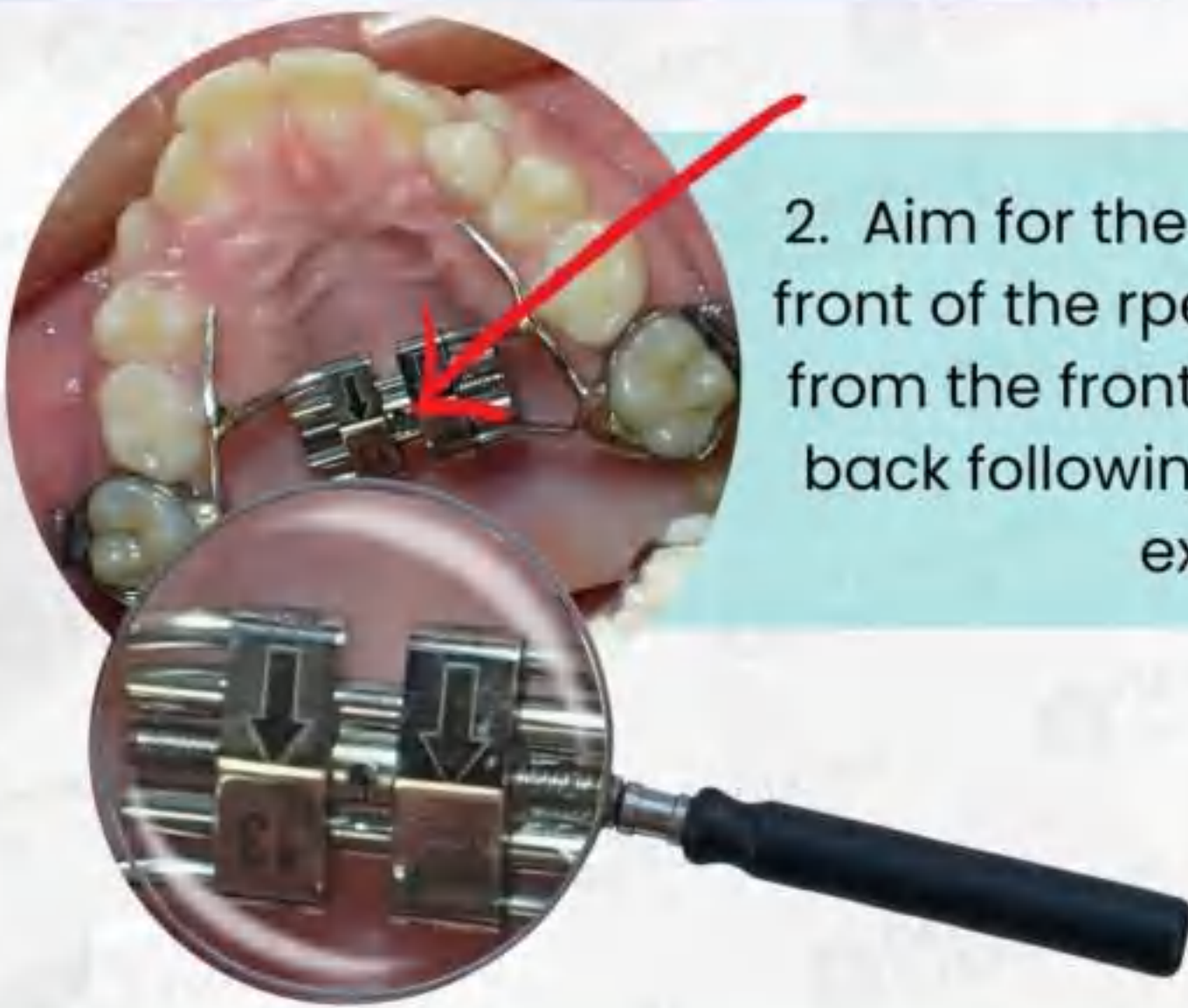
- We will review instructions on how to clean the expander and what foods to avoid.
- Specific instructions on how often we want you to turn the expander will be reviewed.
- We will practice turning the expander with you.



HOW TO TURN THE RPE

WE GET IT!!! TURNING THE RPE CAN BE DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY WHEN FIRST STARTING OUT. IT'S A WHOLE NEW EXPERIENCE, AND CAN BE INTIMIDATING! HERE IS WHAT TO LOOK FOR, HERE IS WHAT IS NORMAL...

1. Find a comfortable, well lit area and give yourself enough time to turn. Sitting or laying still, tip the patient's head back.



2. Aim for the exposed hole at the front of the rpe. you will be turning from the front of the mouth to the back following the arrows on the expander.

3. Place the key firmly in the front hole. Gently push from front to back until resistance is met and you can't turn any further back. The white button on the key will rotate as you push backwards and the new hole will appear in the front.



4. Pushing back and down towards the tongue, remove the key. The next hole for inserting the key should now be fully visible.



HOW OFTEN DO I TURN?

It is important to pay attention to your orthodontist's instructions on when and how often to turn the expander as it may be different patient to patient and week to week.

The RPE is commonly turned 1 turn in the morning and 1 turn in the evening before bedtime, but pay attention to specific instructions from your orthodontist that may be different. If you forget a turn, **DO NOT** do extra turns to make up for it. Just continue turning on your regular schedule.

Your orthodontist will monitor expansion with a weekly check (most common) before or after school. The schedule may be modified based on the amount of turning needed or if you go on vacation. If you miss your RPE check, stop turning until you can be seen by your orthodontist. **DO NOT keep turning the expander without your orthodontist's supervision!**

When the orthodontist determines there is enough expansion, we will seal the screw mechanism with adhesive so it can't unwind. We will continue to monitor the appliance at 8 week intervals (most common) to make sure there are no problems and that it is being kept clean. The RPE is usually ready for us to remove 4-6 months after the final turn to allow the new bone to calcify (harden).



CLEANING YOUR RPE



It is important to keep your expander clean and free of debris. Brush all the bands, arms, and tongue side surfaces of the appliance and floss regularly, even around the bands. After eating, especially when you are at school, swish and rinse with water to dislodge any food under the arms and on the underside of the appliance. At home, daily use of a Waterpik is very helpful to remove food particles from between the expansion screw and palate, under and around the arms, screw, and bands. Food that is left behind in these areas can lead to bad odors, irritation and inflammation of the gums and palate, and sometimes sores on the palate that are uncomfortable, especially if the food is hot or acidic. Make sure you are also keeping your appointments with your general dentist and hygienist during your treatment.



FOODS TO AVOID WITH YOUR RPE



It is important to avoid hard/crunchy and sticky/chewy foods while your expander is in. These can break your expander or loosen the glue that holds it in place.

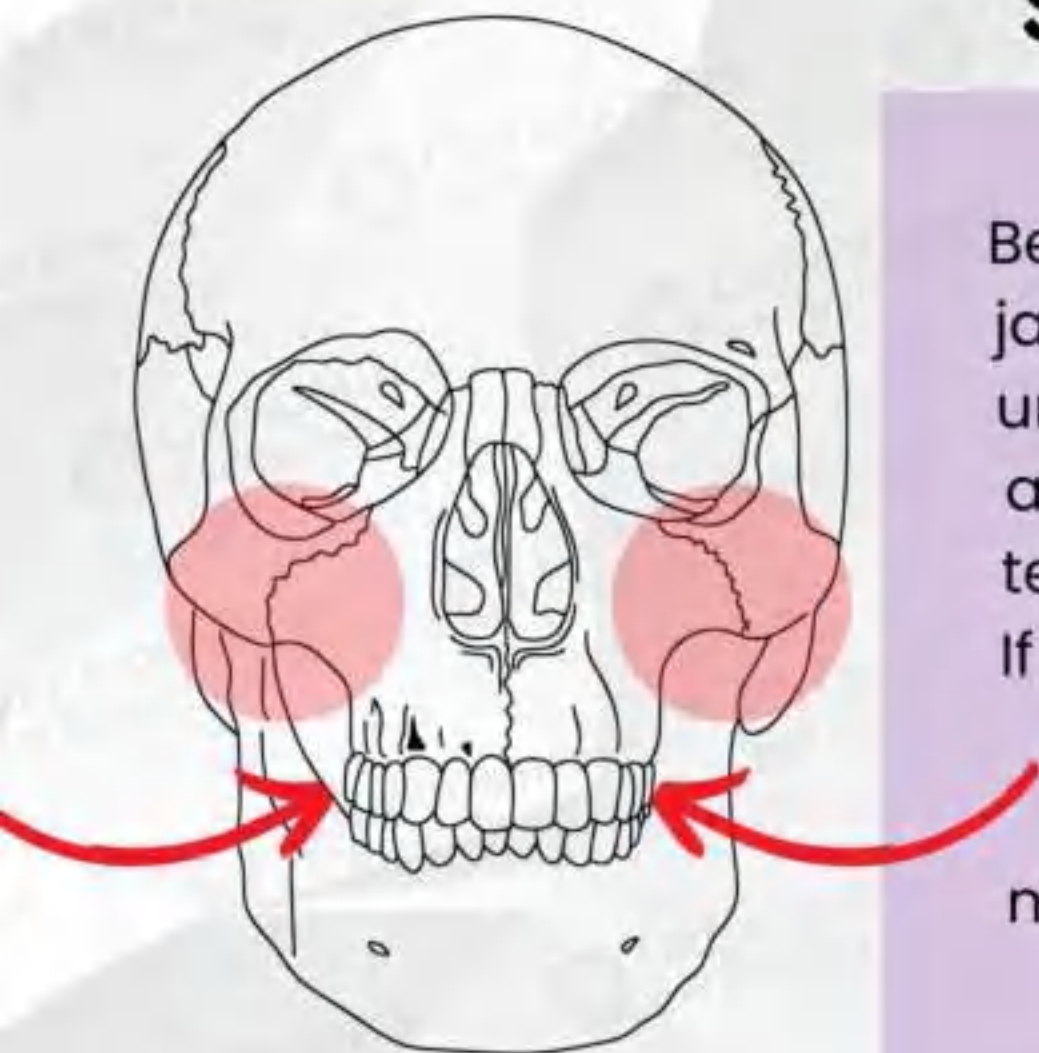
Always avoid eating popcorn as it causes significant gum irritation and inflammation around the bands of the appliance. Hot and acidic foods left above the expander and along the palate or arms of the expander can cause sores and discomfort.

If the expander breaks, becomes loose, or if you are experiencing discomfort, please call or text the office so we can evaluate and make you comfortable.



WHAT TO EXPECT WITH YOUR RPE

SORENESS/DISCOMFORT



Because we are widening the upper jaw and creating new bone, it is not uncommon to experience soreness along the palate, cheekbones, and teeth the expander is anchored to. If needed, take Tylenol or Ibuprofen (what you would take for a headache) according to the manufacturer's instructions for the discomfort.

SPACING OF THE 2 FRONT TEETH

Most patients will develop a space/gap between the two front teeth during the expansion process. For some patients it is small, others it is large. Once the RPE is sealed, the space will start to close naturally.





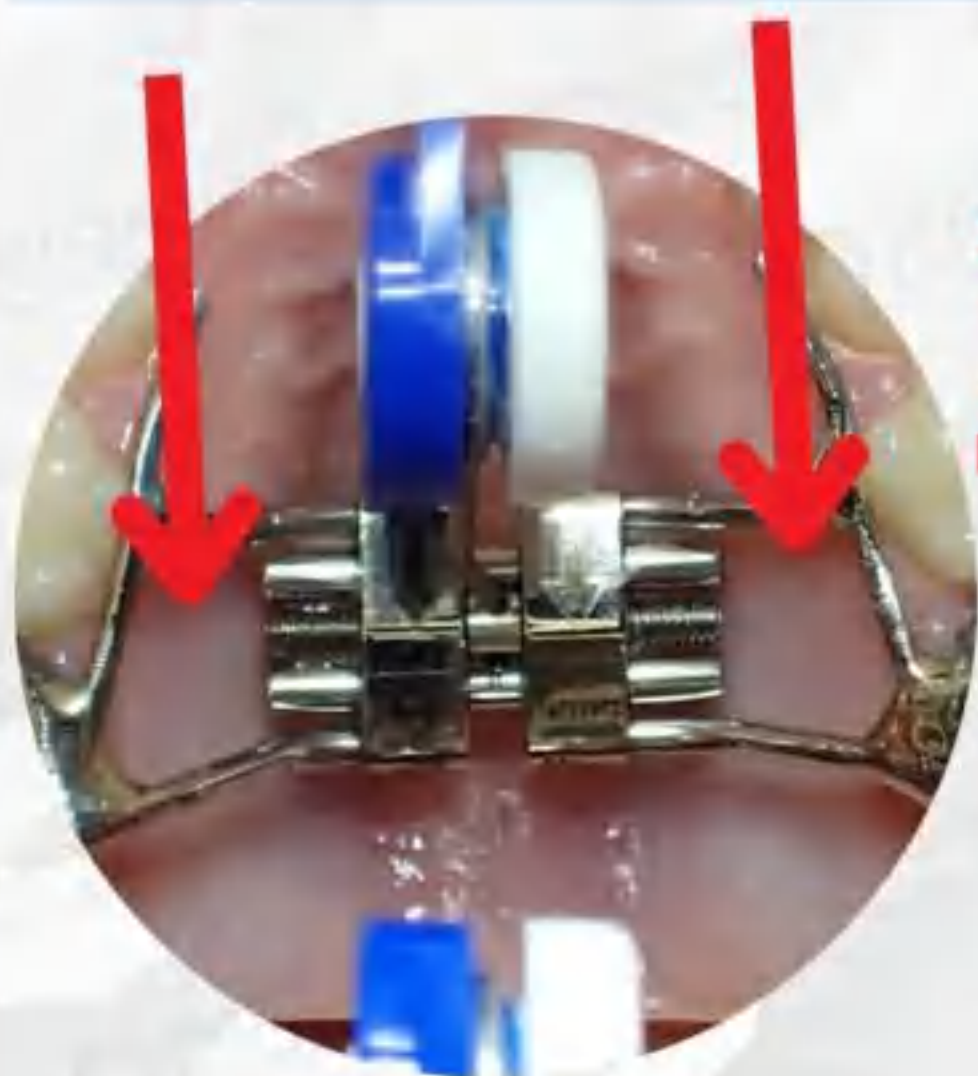
TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR EXPANDER PT.1

INCOMPLETE TURN

The most common problem experienced with the RPE is not completing a full turn from front-to-back and removing the key too soon. When this happens, the hole for the next turn isn't fully exposed and makes it so you can't place the key in the front hole for the next turn.

When this happens, angle the key and place it in the back hole and complete the turn until full resistance is met, then remove the key. The front hole should now be fully open to do your next turn.

If you get stuck and can't get the key in the back hole to complete the turn, call or text our office **during office hours** so we can get you in to help you out with the turn.



MAKE SURE YOU PUSH THE KEY ALL THE WAY BACK TO EXPOSE THE FRONT HOLE FOR YOUR NEXT TURN



TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR EXPANDER PT.2

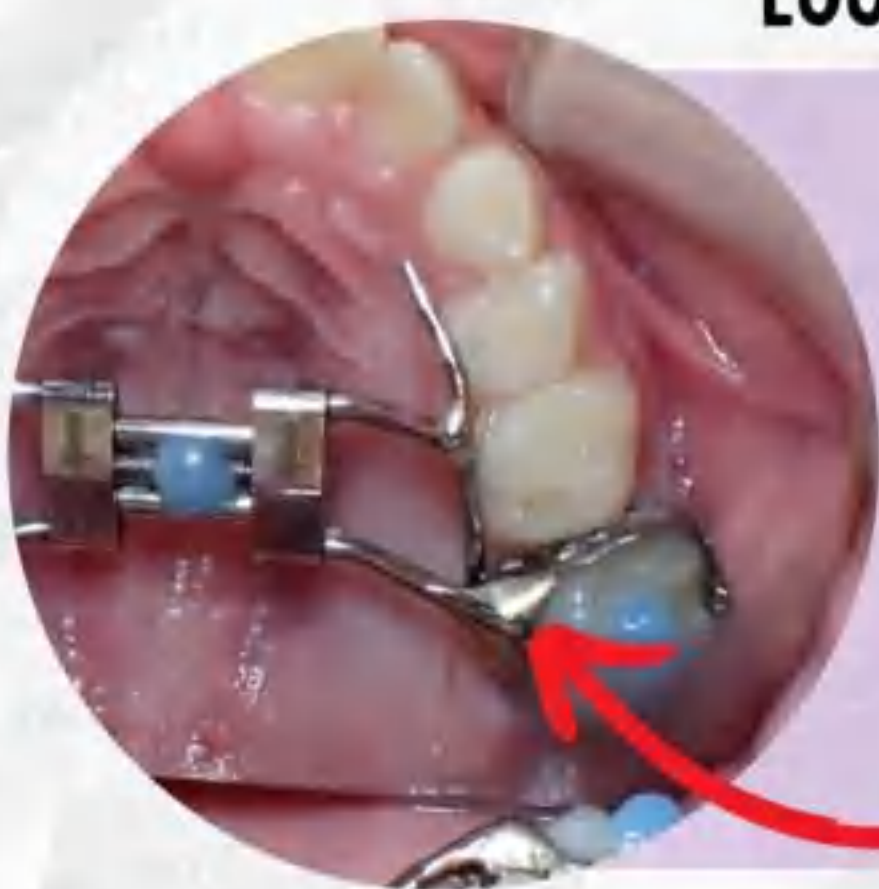
INFLAMMATION/IMPINGEMENT OF THE RPE ARMS.

Sometimes the expander arms can dig into or bury in the palatal tissue causing inflammation and discomfort. Keep the arms clean with good brushing and rinse with lukewarm salt water (1 tsp salt dissolved in a cup of lukewarm water) twice a day. Call/text the office **during office hours** so we can get you in to adjust the arms or remove if needed.



LOOSENING OR BREAKAGE OF THE RPE

Sometimes the bands or solder joint can break or come loose. This happens especially when eating crunchy/hard/sticky foods or when pushing on the arms repeatedly with your tongue. Try to reposition the RPE and leave it alone then call/text the office **during office hours** so we can get you in to assess the situation. If it happens on the weekend and you are in a lot of discomfort, call the office and follow the prompts for the after-hours number and leave a message so we may return your call.



REGULAR DENTAL VISITS IT TAKES TEAMWORK



Although you have orthodontic visits to monitor your palatal expander, it is very important to see your general dentist every 6 months, or as recommended by your dentist. Regular care like cleanings and examinations with x-rays to look for cavities (caries) are essential for a healthy orthodontic outcome.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Once your expansion is complete and the bone has had enough time to calcify (typically 4-6 months), we will follow the next steps your orthodontist prescribed for your treatment. Sometimes this means a limited or full set of braces, another appliance or retainer, or just regular monitoring of your jaw growth and dental development! Your orthodontist and team will let you know the next steps at your scheduled expander check.

IF ANY BRACES ARE PRESENT WITH YOUR PALATAL EXPANDER, CALL OR TEXT OUR OFFICE WHEN YOU HAVE A SCHEDULED DENTAL CLEANING OR VISIT. WE WILL COORDINATE REMOVING THE WIRE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT. IF ANY BRACKETS NEED TO BE REMOVED, PLEASE LET US KNOW FROM WHICH TEETH THEY NEED TO BE REMOVED.