

What to expect and how to prepare for your child's expansion appliance

School Attendance

There are three appointments required to make and place the expansion appliance. We recommend that some of these appointments are scheduled in the morning when your child is most alert and less tired. This is also a time of day when the office is quieter (as opposed to the after school hours.) If your child will receive braces later as a part of their Phase I treatment, we also request that the appointment to place the braces (which is usually 1.5 hours long) be scheduled in the morning. After these initial appointments your child should be well enough to return to work or school for the remainder of the day.

Impressions

At the first and second appointments, we will take impressions for diagnostic models and the expansion appliance. If your child is prone to gagging, it is beneficial to feed them a light lunch or breakfast (or no breakfast until after the appointments.) Please inform us if this may be the case so that we may be extra careful when taking impressions. We have many ways to make this procedure as comfortable and pleasant as possible.

Mild Discomfort

Mild tooth discomfort may begin a few hours after the separators or the expansion appliance is placed and last (on average) up to three days. Ibuprofen (i.e. Advil or Motrin) is the analgesic medication of choice. If you feel your child may benefit from Ibuprofen, give it to them 30 minutes before the first appointment, and an additional dosage a half hour after the appointment. After that, take a dosage every 4-6 hours if the discomfort persists. Every person's pain threshold is different, so please use your discretion. Children under 12 should take no more than 100mg (i.e. ½ an adult tablet) per dosage. You may take Ibuprofen for up to 2-3 days after the braces are placed or a major adjustment appointment, but it is not advisable to continue after that.

Foods to Prepare and Eat

When the expansion appliance is placed, your child may experience some tooth discomfort and soreness of the tongue and cheeks for up to three days. Therefore, it is important for them to avoid hard and crunchy foods. A soft diet for the first few days is also recommended as your child learns to eat with the appliance in their mouth.

