

Instructions for Sagittal Expander

The retainer that the doctor has placed today is called a Sagittal Expander. Its purpose is to make your upper jaw wider and longer. By expanding your upper jaw we can correct cross bites, and make space so that your adult teeth can be aligned properly.

Turn the Sagittal 1 time per week (unless otherwise instructed by the doctor). We have provided you with a metal key that your parent will use to turn the appliance. Insert the key into the hole at the tail of the arrow. Push the key straight back from the tail of the arrow toward the head of the arrow until it cannot be pushed any further and then gently slide the key out of the hole. Repeat these procedures for all activations. Always activate the expander in the same direction (from the Tail of the Arrow toward the Head of the Arrow).

Each time the Sagittal is activated it expands the jaw about $\frac{1}{4}$ mm. This is about the thickness of a human hair. Over 12-24 months, these small increments of expansion will add up to a full correction. It is important that you be seen by the doctor every 8-12 weeks until the expansion is complete. Your teeth and gums may be sore for the next few days. Some patients also experience a feeling of pressure in their sinuses (around their eyes and nose). If you are experiencing discomfort you may take the recommended dosage of Tylenol or Motrin for your age and/or weight. Please remember that children under 12 years of age should not take aspirin. Speech and swallowing may be difficult for the first few days. Hang in there, it takes about a week, but everybody gets used to it!

The Sagittal appliance is meant to be worn full time, however, we do request that you remove it when you are eating, playing sports, horsing around, or brushing. The appliance is made of plastic and could break in your mouth if you are not careful. When the appliance is not in your mouth, it should be in the case that we provided. Do not wrap it in a napkin (it is likely that it will inadvertently end up in the trash can). Also, keep it away from high temperatures, as it can melt. It is fragile and expensive to replace. We will have to charge you for a new one if it is lost or broken... so please take good care of your appliance. It is also important that you take very good care of your teeth and gums while in treatment. Food particles and plaque can easily gather around the sagittal retainer. Please remove your retainer and brush it every time that you brush your teeth. Poor oral hygiene can lead to cavities, decalcifications (permanent scars on your teeth) and gum disease. We want your experience to be a healthy one, so please spend extra time brushing and flossing your teeth. Please remember to continue seeing your general dentist regularly for cleanings and examinations while in orthodontic treatment. We are a team and with your cooperation we can make your treatment a great success!