

space maintainer

The space maintainer is used to create space and/or hold space for permanent teeth to come in. When a baby tooth is removed or missing, the other teeth around it will drift into the space where the baby tooth used to be.

If that happens, it will block the permanent tooth that would normally come into that space. Baby molar teeth are generally wider than the permanent teeth that will come in, so holding that space will create more room for all the teeth to come in.

GETTING USED TO YOUR APPLIANCE

As with anything new, it will take time to adjust to your appliance. You may have difficulty speaking or swallowing at first (excess saliva may occur initially as the mouth adjusts to the appliance) but, after a few days, it will improve. Reading aloud or simply speaking frequently helps this transition.



Be sure to spend enough time brushing/flossing around your space maintainer. It should take at least 2 minutes to brush, with extra time to floss. Using mouthwash or a Waterpik™ can help to dislodge any food that becomes caught.

The space maintainer is generally kept until all permanent teeth come into that arch (upper or lower, depending on where the appliance is located). The doctor will advise you as to the expected timeframe the appliance will be kept in place.

If you experience any problems, contact our office right away so we can see you to evaluate it.

As with all orthodontic appliances, you should avoid hard/crunchy and chewy/sticky foods during treatment. Examples:

- Hard/Crunchy: Ice, kettle cooked chips, raw veggies or fruits (they can be cut into smaller pieces), Takis, hard candy
- Chewy/Sticky: Gum, Skittles, Starburst, Gummy candies, Sour Patch Kids, jelly beans, caramels

