



ASHBURN
PEDIATRIC DENTAL CENTER
(703) 726-4333

ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCE FACT SHEET

Schwartz Expander

Your Schwartz expander fits in the roof of your mouth. It is made of acrylic and metal. The purpose of the Schwartz expander is to increase the width of the upper jaw. This is done by turning the screw that is in the center of the appliance. You will do this for a period of time directed by the Doctor. You will take the expander out of your mouth to turn the screw.

Things to Know

- To achieve the desired results, you must wear your Schwartz expander 24 hours per day. You will only remove it to brush your teeth and to turn the screw. You will wear the appliance when eating and drinking.
- When you remove the expander to brush your teeth, also thoroughly, but gently (so that you don't bend any wires), brush the appliance with your toothbrush and toothpaste. Soaking it in water with Efferdent tablets once a week will also keep it clean and prevent build-up of plaque and tartar. Always use cool or lukewarm, never hot, water.
- Avoid sticky foods such as taffy, caramels, gummy candies, starburst, skittles, and gum. Also, avoid hard foods such as ice, nuts, and hard candy. These can damage or break your Schwartz expander.
- It is best to brush your teeth and the expander after every meal. If you can't, at least rinse your mouth and the expander with water to remove any food particles.
- After expansion is complete, the Schwartz expander will remain in place for several months.
- Activate your expander as directed by the doctor. **If you need to reschedule, cancel or miss an appointment after the expander is delivered, to prevent over-expansion, STOP TURNING the appliance at the original date of the rescheduled/cancelled/missed appointment (when you were supposed to be seen).** When the Doctor evaluates you at your next appointment, he will direct you whether additional turns are needed.
- After each turn, you will notice a slight pressure on the teeth. This pressure usually goes away after a few hours. Do not turn the screw immediately before bed, as this pressure might keep you awake. The best time to turn the screw is after school in the early afternoon.
- Because your mouth is not used to having an appliance in it, there will be a period of adjustment. You may notice increased saliva, slight speech impairment, and slight tenderness. Continuous wear of the Schwartz expander will speed the adjustment process.
- Speak out loud as much as possible during the first couple of days to allow your tongue to get used to this appliance.
- Keep your expander out of reach from pets, as they like to use them as chew-toys.
- Remove the appliance by inserting your finger into the back of your mouth and put a downward pressure on the wire hook attached to the first molar. Do not remove the expander with your tongue or by the front wire, as this can damage your appliance.
- Each patient is unique, and their needs are different. For some people, the use of an over-the-counter medicine similar to that taken for a headache can be used to help the initial soreness. If this is needed, it is usually only for the first day or two.
- Please call us immediately if anything feels loose or broken.

Emergencies

If you have an after-hours emergency that cannot be resolved after following the instructions provided, please call Dr. Joe on his cell phone at (703) 597-8558.