

Post-Operative Instructions for a Space Maintainer (to hold space for adult tooth eruption)

Important Info For Parents: Your child's space maintainer should remain in place until the adult tooth begins erupting. If it becomes loose or comes off, please call our office immediately so we can recement the appliance. If the appliance is lost, it is imperative that you know whether your child swallowed or inhaled the appliance. Both can be very serious and emergency treatment with your pediatrician is required.

Comfort: Sensitivity is expected after the placement of a space maintainer. The appliance often feels "different" for a few days after it is placed. Over-the-counter pain medicine (children's Tylenol or ibuprofen/Motrin) may be given in the appropriate dose for your child.

Diet: The space maintainer is cemented onto the tooth with a dental cement that contains fluoride. This cement takes about 12 hours to achieve its final set. A soft diet for the rest of the day is suggested. Crowns may come off if your child eats sticky, chewy or gummy foods (ie. gum, candies and fruit snacks). Please avoid these as long as your child has the space maintainer on his/her teeth.

Oral Hygiene: The gums may appear red and irritated following your child's appointment and a slight amount of bleeding is normal. This will go away within a few days of good home oral hygiene. It is important to continue normal brushing and cleaning around the space maintainer. Food debris and plaque can easily be trapped around the appliance.

Periodic Evaluation: Children with space maintainers should be seen by the dentist at a minimum of every 6 months for routine examinations of the bite, fit of the band and tooth eruption. Failure to return for follow-up visits can lead to gum problems, cavities and pain for your child. No anesthetic is required to remove the space maintainer and it is a very quick and easy procedure.



Images courtesy of Denovo and
<http://www.nualacagneydental.ie>.