

# Pediatric Dental Appliances

## Space Maintainers:

A space maintainer is a device that maintains and saves the space of the arch and space between teeth when a tooth has been lost.

Reasons for premature tooth loss may be:

- Trauma/fracture beyond repair
- Abscessed tooth requiring removal
- Congenitally missing teeth where the space needs to be saved

The baby teeth are in our mouth for several reasons. One key reason is to save space for the permanent teeth. If the space is not saved, the other teeth may drift into the space. This drifting can cause tooth crowding and even impede or block the eruption of an adult tooth that has not yet erupted. Once the spacer is cemented, it can be in your child's mouth for anywhere from 1 year to 3 years (occasionally longer). It will be removed when the adult tooth erupts or when the teeth holding onto the spacer become loose or fall out.



## Nance Appliance:

The Nance is a fixed (non-removable) appliance that acts as a space maintainer to keep the molars from drifting forward and to prevent them from blocking the space where the permanent teeth will eventually erupt.

The Nance appliance fits comfortably along the roof of the mouth with bands that are placed on the upper arch of the two back molars. A wire connects the bands and a small piece of acrylic (plastic) is located at the center of the wire.

Patients with the appliance should make sure to pay special attention to the roof of their mouth while brushing to prevent gum irritation. They should practice good oral hygiene and avoid drinking carbonated beverages and avoid eating hard or sticky food. Eating or drinking these types of food can damage the appliance.





## Lower Lingual Holding Arch:

Placed as a temporary lower retainer, the lower lingual holding arch (LLHA) holds the molars in place to prevent them from drifting forward after baby tooth loss. It is placed on the inside of the lower teeth. This orthodontic appliance is used to treat crowding as the adult permanent teeth erupt.

Patients with the appliance should make sure to pay special attention to the bottom of their mouth while brushing to prevent gum irritation. They should practice good oral hygiene and avoid drinking carbonated beverages and avoid eating hard or sticky food. Eating or drinking these types of food can damage the appliance.



## Habit Breaking Appliance

When your child has a habit such as thumb or finger sucking, their teeth can be pushed out of the correct position. It can cause the shape of their palate to change. The pressure from their fingers can change the way the jaw develops causing a number of problems: protrusion of the upper teeth, an open bite, misaligned teeth, or it can cause the lower jaw to decrease its growth causing a larger overbite. The only way to fix any of these issues once your child is older, may be with orthodontic treatment which may also include surgery.

Most parents have tried multiple attempts at kicking this habit before they begin looking for other options.

Your dentist may recommend placing a habit breaking appliance which can help encourage your child to quit their habit. This is an orthodontic appliance that is cemented to the upper molars and rests along the roof of your child's mouth. It is minimally invasive yet effective. It has blunt "forks" that will discourage your child from putting their fingers or thumb in their mouth. They can still fit their fingers in their mouth but it is uncomfortable, so they tend to stop with the aid of this appliance. Typically, most children will stop sucking their thumb or fingers within 6 months.



Your child may experience some sensitivity for the first few days while they are adjusting to their new appliance. A softer diet and pain reliever will make them more comfortable during this time. We will review with you how to clean your child's teeth around this appliance and foods they may need to avoid while they have this appliance in their mouth.