



## Palatal Expander (RPE)

A Rapid Maxillary Expander is an appliance used to widen a narrow upper jaw and correct a cross-bite. A cross-bite is when some of the upper teeth bite inside the lower teeth and is the reverse of the normal situation.

Many children who have a cross bite also have an associated facial asymmetry. Early correction of a cross-bite gives the jaws the best chance of developing in a normal, symmetrical manner. Making the jaw wider also creates some extra space for the permanent teeth to erupt in correct positions.

### How Does it work?

The upper jaw consists of two separate bones, left and right, which are joined together by a growth plate. The Rapid Maxillary Expander works by pushing the left and right sides apart.

This appliance is fixed to the upper teeth and contains an expansion screw. This screw is turned on a daily basis, resulting in a wider upper jaw and increased bone development in the area of the growth plate. A space will also develop between the upper front teeth. This space is temporary and will close when the turns are complete.

### Hygiene

Brush the appliance including the metal bars & screw in the same way you brush your teeth. When you are unable to brush after eating, use water swished around in your mouth to help dislodge any food particles. [For more instruction on oral hygiene please see the brushing instruction leaflet which we provided separately.](#)

### What to expect

**Speech.** Your speech will be affected. This is not permanent & the best way to get used to this is to speak aloud as much as possible, try reading out loud or singing.

**Soreness.** Your teeth may be sore for the first few days. To help with this you may want to take what you would normally take for a headache.

**Bite.** As the palate expands the teeth will not fit together properly, this is normal. Your bite will feel off as the width of your palate changes

**Space between your front teeth.** Although this is a good sign from the standpoint of your treatment, it can be disheartening from a cosmetic point of view. By the time you stop turning the screw, the space may look large enough to fit another tooth. This space should close by itself within a short time.

