

# RAPID MAXILLARY EXPANSION (RME)

## How long do I have to wear the RME?

The RME will have to be worn all the time for a period of 3-9 months. During the first 2-3 weeks, you will be adjusting the RME to make the upper jaw bone wider. In the remaining months it is left alone to allow new bone to fill in the gap under the gum between the two halves of the upper jaw. After arch widening is complete, a fixed brace is fitted to maintain the width of the upper jaw.



Fixed brace maintaining expansion

## Will I need another brace later?

After treatment with your RME it is very likely that you will need to have further treatment with a fixed brace to straighten your teeth.

## What if I play a musical instrument?

A fixed brace may make it more difficult for you to play your wind or brass instrument. You will need to discuss this with your music teacher and orthodontist. Download the advice sheet on this subject from the BOS website ([www.bos.org.uk](http://www.bos.org.uk)).

## What about tooth brushing?

It is important that you brush your teeth well at all times during orthodontic treatment. We would recommend that you brush your teeth for 3 minutes, twice a day using a fluoride toothpaste. If possible, carry a toothbrush with you for use after lunch and snacks at break time. Failure to keep the teeth and RME clean can lead to permanent damage of your teeth.

## How often do I need an appointment?

You will need regular appointments (usually every 2-6 weeks) to review the progress of your RME.

## Do I still need to see my regular dentist?

Yes. It will be important for you to continue to have check-ups with your regular dentist throughout orthodontic treatment so that your teeth can be checked for decay.

## What should I do if there is any problem with the RME appliance?

If you have any problems or concerns, stop turning the expansion screw. Ring up for an appointment as soon as is reasonably possible. Do not wait for your next routine appointment as the breakage may slow your treatment or may cause damage to your teeth.

The daytime telephone number you should contact if you have any problem is:

Tel.....



This leaflet has been produced with guidance from the Plain English Campaign and British Dyslexia Association to make it easier for you to read

Your orthodontist has suggested you may need **rapid maxillary expansion (RME)**. You may have some questions you would like answered.

### What is the purpose of RME?

RME (sometimes called rapid palatal expansion) is a technique used to widen (expand) your upper jaw (palate) when it is narrow.

### What are the main parts to it?

The expander appliance is a fixed brace made from a mould of your teeth to fit your mouth only. It is fixed to the upper teeth. You cannot remove it.



**RME with metal bands**

The metal framework contains an expansion screw in the middle to widen the upper jaw. It is attached to metal bands cemented on the back teeth or to a plastic splint which is cemented firmly to the back teeth.



**RME with plastic splint**

### How does the RME work?

Your upper jaw bone forms in two halves. The RME moves these two halves apart and holds them there while new bone fills in the "gap" under the gum.

As the RME widens the upper jaw, a temporary gap often appears between the two front teeth. Don't worry about this as it will close later during treatment.



**Start of treatment**



**After widening complete**



**The final result after RME and fixed brace treatment**

### Are there any special instructions I need to know?

The expansion screw in the metal framework needs to be turned, usually twice a day or as instructed by your orthodontist. A special key is given to you for this purpose.

### Can I eat normally?

**Yes.** You should be able to eat normally. However, for your orthodontic treatment to work well and in the shortest possible time, it is important for you to take care of your teeth and brace. In order to prevent damage to both, you should:

- Avoid sugary snacks/drinks between meals and at bedtime.
- Avoid sticky, chewy or hard sweets, mints and sugared chewing gum.
- Avoid fizzy drinks (including diet drinks) and large amounts of fruit juice.
- Hard or chewy foods - such as apples, carrots and crusty bread - can damage your brace. Avoid them or cut them up first!

### Will it be painful?

Your teeth may be sore for 3-5 days after the brace is fitted. If necessary, simple painkillers such as the ones you would normally take for a headache should help - please read the instructions on the packet. If the RME rubs your lips or cheeks, you can use some wax to help with this. Your orthodontist can give you further advice.

Some patients feel a sense of pushing on their teeth at first which soon goes away as the upper jaw bone widens.