

**Palatal Divider
(widens upper jaw)**

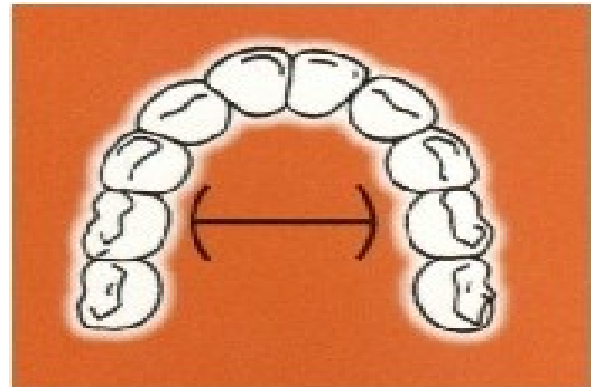
**Palatal
Divider**

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What It Does

Sometimes a patient's upper jaw needs to be enlarged. In such cases the orthodontist may widen the upper jaw with a palate divider. We call it a Rapid Palatal Expander or RPE. This device comfortably spreads apart the halves of the upper jaw. New bone then fills in between the two halves, and the upper jaw remains permanently wider.



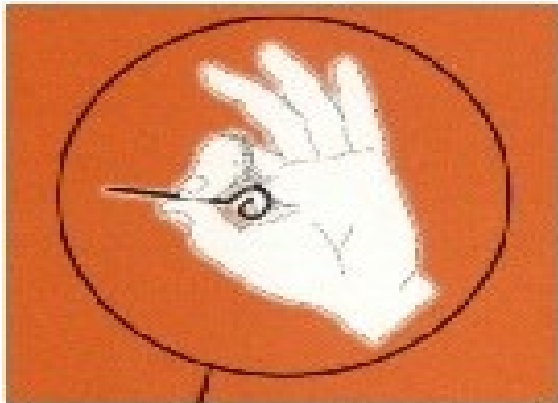
Daily Use

There are many designs for these dividers, but all of them have a center screw that must be turned with a key. Turns vary from once a day to once a week. In rare occasions, you will be told to turn the screw more or less than this. The screw is usually turned from 7 days up to 40 days .each patient is different.

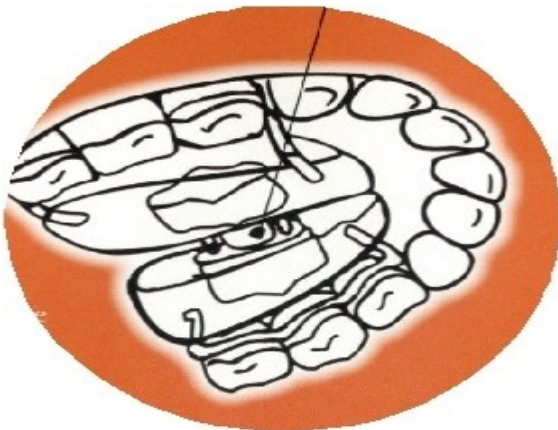
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The divider is activated by placing the key into the key-hole in the center screw and then gently pushing toward the back of the mouth one notch or one full push/turn.) Usually the turn is done by the patient but may be done by another individual other than the patient. It is important that the safety handle, string, floss or yarn is attached to the key and then wrapped around the finger to protect the patient from swallowing the key



How Long?

After the dividing screw has been opened the proper amount, the patient will continue to wear the appliance for two to six months.

This allows time for new bone to fill in and insures that the widening will not relapse.



Remember

- Keep your mouth super clean
- Be on time to see the orthodontist
- Be gentle with the appliance
- Follow your turning instructions very carefully!

At First

The first noticeable effect of the divider is that the front teeth begin to separate. This is a sign that the appliance is working correctly. The space will close naturally when the key turning has stopped.

Mouth Tender?

Sometimes activating the divider causes minor discomfort near the bridge of the nose and out toward the cheekbones. Usually aspirin, Tylenol or Ibuprofen will handle this.

Important

On older patients, the divider sometimes will not work since their bone has already matured. Activating the divider in these cases can cause enough discomfort that it is better not to use the divider.

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