

## Space Maintainer – Post-Op Instructions (Shortened)

### Purpose

- The space maintainer keeps room open for your child's permanent tooth to erupt properly.
- Without it, teeth can shift, causing crowding or eruption problems.

### Diet

- The appliance is cemented securely, but **sticky, chewy, and hard foods can loosen it.**
- Avoid:
  - Caramels, taffy, gum
  - Hard candy, gummy bears, Jolly Ranchers
  - Ice cubes, crunchy/hard foods
  - Any sticky or chewy snacks
- Keep sugary foods to a minimum.

### Oral Hygiene

- Space maintainers trap extra food and plaque.
- Your child must maintain **excellent brushing and flossing** to prevent gum problems and cavities.

### Follow-Up Visits

- Your child should be seen **every 6 months** (or as recommended) to check:
  - Bite
  - Fit of the bands
  - Tooth eruption
- Failure to return can lead to gum issues, decay, and crooked teeth.
- The dentist will remove the appliance when it is no longer needed.

### Patient Cooperation

- The space maintainer is **not a toy.**
- Do not flip it with the tongue or pick at wires/bands – this can loosen or damage it.

### If the Space Maintainer Becomes Loose

- Call the office **immediately.**
- If it comes out completely, place it in an envelope and keep it safe.
- Quick attention often allows simple recementing; delays may require a new appliance.

### Comfort

- Space maintainers are passive appliances – **they should not cause pain.**
- Mild speech changes or awareness of the appliance are normal for a few days.
- If your child has pain or discomfort, call the office.

### General Notes

- Your dentist wants your child's experience to be smooth and comfortable.
- Contact the office with any concerns about looseness, discomfort, or hygiene.
- You are responsible for costs if instructions are not followed.