

# Rapid Maxillary Expander

## Information Guide

### WHAT IS A RAPID MAXILLARY EXPANDER (RME)?

A Rapid Maxillary Expander (RME) is an appliance used to widen a narrow upper jaw and correct a crossbite. A crossbite 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 crossbite also have an associated facial asymmetry. Early correction of a crossbite gives the jaws the best chance of developing in a normal, symmetrical manner. Making the jaw wider also creates some extra space for the teeth.



Before



After

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

The upper jaw consists of two separate bones, left and right, which are joined together by a growth plate. The RME works by pushing the left and right sides apart. The RME is cemented 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 develop between the upper front teeth during the expansion phase. This space is temporary and will close by itself when the turns are complete.



## APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

A couple of appointments are required to custom make and insert the RME.

### **Appointment 1: Intra-oral Scan (10 mins)**

A 3-D digital scan is taken of the teeth and forwarded to a local laboratory, where the RME is made with a combination of 3-D printing and traditional laboratory techniques.

### **Appointment 2: Inserting the RME (30 mins)**

The teeth will be polished, and the RME will be cemented to the teeth with a dental adhesive. A parent or guardian will be shown how to turn the expansion screw. Care instructions are also given.

Subsequent appointments with the orthodontist are usually scheduled every two weeks until the desired amount of expansion has been achieved. The RME will be in place for 4-6 months. Most people will be fitted with a retainer after their RME has been removed.

## ADJUSTING TO LIFE WITH AN RME

With any new appliance there is a period of adaptation. It can be challenging to talk, eat and drink, but with practice improves rapidly.

There is usually some discomfort for the first few days after the RME has been fitted. Mild pain relieving medication can be taken, if required.

Sweet and acidic food and drinks are best avoided, as they can damage the teeth. It is also important to avoid eating sticky foods, as they can cause the RME to become loose.

**Pure Orthodontics**

phone: 9370 3155 | [www.pureorthodontics.com.au](http://www.pureorthodontics.com.au) | email [info@pureorthodontics.com.au](mailto:info@pureorthodontics.com.au)

