Space Maintenance

Space maintainers are appliances designed to hold space for a permanent tooth. This is usually done after a baby tooth is extracted or lost early. A space maintainer “holds” the space and prevents the other teeth from moving into that area, blocking the permanent tooth from coming in.

They are cemented into place with a dental cement and are passive appliances (i.e. they do not move teeth). They may be unilateral (placed on one side of the mouth), bilateral (placed on one side of the mouth to the other), on the upper teeth or lower teeth. They may be placed on baby or permanent teeth. A stainless steel band (“ring”) is fit onto the tooth and an impression is taken. This is sent to the lab and when it is returned to us in 1-2 weeks, we call you to cement the appliance.

Space maintainer care is similar to that of stainless steel crowns:

1. Avoid sticky foods/candies such as gummies, fruit snacks, fruit roll-ups and chewing gum (to name a few) as these may pull the space maintainer off or loosen it.

2. If it does come out, keep it and call our office, so that we may re-cement it as soon as possible. Any delay may begin to move into that space.

3. Continue to brush around the space maintainer with morning and bedtime brushing.

4. The space maintainers are removed when the permanent tooth starts to come in. We can tell you approximately when that will be depending on which tooth was extracted.

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