

# 841 • 845 • Space Maintainer

## Space Maintainer after Extraction of a Baby Molar Tooth

Space maintainers are used to preserve the space for the future adult tooth which may take some time before it comes through. It may not be feasible in every extraction situations (if you are unsure whether this is feasible in your child, please speak to the dentist)

### Risk of non-treatment/ delay treatment:

Space loss and localised dental crowding in future.

**Have you been shown a model of a space maintainer? If not, please inform us immediately, or see our website for further diagrams.**

### What you need to know about space maintainers:

- It is made of stainless steel, containing nickel chromium.
- It is silver in colour and can be visible in the mouth.
- Before making a space maintainer, the dentist needs to confirm that the adult tooth is present and not congenitally missing by reviewing an OPG x-ray.
- Space maintainers can occasionally de-bond from the tooth it is cemented on. When this happens, they should be re-cemented as soon as possible.
- Your local dentist may not be able to assist to re-glue the space maintainer and it is best to be done at our clinics. A fee will be charged to re-glue the space maintainer.
- In some children the space maintainer can frequently be dislodged (every few months).
- Sticky foods should be avoided as it may dislodge the space maintainer more easily.
- The space maintainer may break, dislodge and distort which will require a new one to be made. The full cost of a new space maintainer applies.
- It may need to be re-constructed when the child grows out of the space maintainer. The full cost to remake a new space maintainer applies.
- Increased risk of developing holes (decay) because it is more difficult to clean around the space maintainer.
- **For custom-made space maintainers -** Patients need at least two visits to construct and insert a space maintainer. The first visit is to take a mould of the mouth. The second visit is to insert space maintainer.

- If the child refuses to cooperate for the dentist to attach a space maintainer onto the tooth, we will not insist, but please note parents are still liable for the full cost of the space maintainer even though it cannot be cemented in your child's mouth.
- The space maintainer needs to be removed by the dentist when the new tooth is erupting
- If your child has an irregular bite pattern, or less than ideal jaw growth pattern, he/she may still need orthodontic therapy in the future regardless of whether space maintainers were used or not.
- There are different space maintainer designs for different situations. The diagrams below may or may not be the one that would work in your child's situation. Please discuss with the dentist the appropriate design if you would like to know more.
- If you need independent advice on space maintainers – we suggest you consult a specialist orthodontist to obtain more information and opinion.

### There are 2 ways that we fabricate and insert space maintainers:

1. In some cases, the patient may be able to have a pre fabricated space maintainer inserted while under general anaesthetic at the time of the tooth extraction. This will depend on the size & shape of your child's tooth and if this is not possible, it may need to be fabricated at a dental laboratory to fit your child's tooth (see option 2).
2. Alternatively, for custom-made space maintainers, the patient will require a mould taken of their teeth (either under general anaesthetic or in the dental chair), then return two weeks later to have the space maintainer inserted. If the child refuses to cooperate at the space maintainer insert appointment, parents are still liable for the full cost of the appliance even though it cannot be cemented into your child's mouth.

