**Post-operative Instructions - Pediatric Space Maintainer**

**Please adhere to the following instructions to expedite your child's healing process and avoid any unnecessary discomfort:**

**· IT MAY TAKE SOME TIME FOR YOUR CHILD TO GET USED TO THE SPACE MAINTAINER.**It is normal for it take a few days before your child gets used to having the space maintainer in their mouth but it is a necessary appliance because it acts like a space holder so that the adult tooth is able to come into place easily and in the correct position. Without the space maintainer, the teeth adjacent could collapse into this space and prevent the adult tooth from coming in.

**· DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO EAT ANYTHING STICKY, CHEWY OR HARD AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO CHEW ON THE OTHER SIDE.** Foods such as hard candies, chewing gum, fruit snacks, caramels, taffy and other sticky foods can dislodge the space maintainer, so it is important to stay away from these foods while the child has a space maintainer. For the first 24 hours, it is recommended to keep your child to a soft diet and have them chew on the other side since the cement used can take some time to fully set and your child's tooth and surrounding gums can be sensitive following any dental procedure.

**· AVOID ALLOWING YOUR CHILD TO FIDDLE WITH THEIR SPACE MAINTAINER.** Pushing the space maintainer with their tongue or picking at the wires and bands with their fingers can loosen, deform, or dislodge the appliance, so its important to encourage your child to just ignore the space maintainer all together.

**· IF YOUR CHILD'S SPACE MAINTAINER COMES LOOSE OR COMES OFF, PLEASE REMOVE IT FROM YOUR CHILD'S MOUTH** and please call our office. Please be sure to hold onto the space maintainer and bring it with you to your child's appointment so it can be recemented if possible.

**· YOUR CHILD'S TOOTH/TEETH MAY FEEL SENSITIVE AND THE SURROUNDING GUMS MAY APPEAR RED OR SLIGHTLY SWOLLEN BUT THIS IS NORMAL** and should subside over the next few days. As long as the sensitivity or soreness continues to lessen, there is no need for concern. If the pain is severe or they are unable eat or bite down on the tooth/teeth after 24-48 hours, please call our office.

**· TAKE MEDICATION** as instructed by the doctor. To reduce pain or soreness, your child can take Children's Tylenol or Children's Motrin as directed per the manufacturer label unless they are allergic or have otherwise been instructed not to take it.

**· BRUSHING AND FLOSSING IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER BEFORE**. Space maintainers can make brushing and flossing more of a challenge with the extra hardware you have navigate around. More food particles may also get stuck around the appliance and if left unremoved could lead to severe cavities. It will be crucial that your child continues to brush and floss daily and it is encouraged that they brush and floss the appliance as well to get rid of any food particles that may be locking in around the appliance. For the first 24 hours, it may be necessary to be more gentle on the gums in the area of the space maintainer as they may be irritated.

**· CONTINUE YOUR ROUTINE 6 MONTH CHECK-UPS AND CLEANINGS FOR YOUR CHILD.**These appointments are always important to make sure your child's teeth and gums maintain their health. Additionally, the doctor will utilize these appointments as an opportunity to check on the progress of the adult teeth in order to determine when the appliance will need to be removed.

**Please call our office if:**

· If your child's space maintainer comes loose or comes off. Please be sure to hold onto the space maintainer and bring it with you to your child's appointment so it can be recemented if possible.

· If the pain is severe or your child is unable to eat or bite down on the tooth/teeth after 24-48 hours.

· If you notice your child's adult tooth coming into the place inside the are of the space maintainer.