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## Caring for your *Space Maintainer/Oral Appliance*

The purpose of a space maintainer is to hold the space of the missing tooth. It ensures that the permanent tooth replacement has its space to come in when it is time and hopefully limits the needs for orthodontic intervention in the future.

Your child's space maintainer was delivered today and in order to properly maintain it, we request that you please follow these instructions:

1. The space maintainer was cemented into place with material that contains fluoride and takes about 12 hours to entirely set. So for the rest of the day, a **soft diet** is recommended.
2. Your child may express discomfort and sensitivity around the tooth where the metal band is cemented, saying it "feels different." The tissue may also become red/irritated for several days, which is normal.
  - a. Encourage your child to **avoid** touching/poking the wire of the space maintainer
  - b. Salt water rinses may help to reduce inflammation
  - c. Over the counter pain medicine (i.e. Tylenol or Motrin) may be given at the appropriate dose to eliminate any discomfort
3. Sticky, chewy and crunchy foods and carbonated beverages can cause the space maintainer to become loose or break. Thus it is important to **avoid** foods such as **fruit snacks, chewing gum, lollipops, taffy, caramel, nuts, potato chips, popcorn, ice and soda etc.**
4. The space maintainer should be cared for just as your child's teeth – with proper brushing twice per day and regular daily flossing. **The metal should sparkle and be shiny!** The tissue around a space maintainer can become red/irritated if it is **not** cleaned well.
5. As you visit our office, we will routinely check the fit and integrity of the space maintainer. At the appropriate time, we will remove the space maintainer – when the permanent tooth begins to erupt.
6. At any time if the space maintainer becomes **loose**, safely remove it, place it in a zip-lock bag and call our office so that we may recement it into place.

If you have any questions/concerns, please call the office at **571-799-0559**.

