

Guide to your HERBST APPLIANCE

Your Herbst appliance is designed to improve the position of the lower jaw and correct large bite discrepancies in patients that are growing. It is fixed to the teeth with metal crowns and has upper and lower parts. If your upper jaw needs widening, the upper part of the Herbst appliance will also include a Rapid Maxillary Expander (RME for short). Please see the additional information on using the expander. The upper and lower parts are connected with telescoping arms or rods that sit between your teeth and cheeks.



What to expect:

To start with, your mouth will feel unusually full and eating and speaking can feel awkward. Practice speaking and reading aloud to allow your speech to adjust back to normal. Take small frequent sips of water and eat soft food to get used to swallowing with the appliance in place. You may also notice that you seem to have more saliva than normal - don't worry, this will all go back to normal very soon.



You may experience some irritation of your cheeks and lips when the appliance is placed. Soon the tissue will toughen up but initially you may like to place some cotton rolls inside your cheeks to keep them away and give them a 'rest'. Products like Bonjela can help if you have any ulcers or sore spots.

Initially your teeth will not bite together normally, and you may find you are only biting on your front teeth. This usually improves after 7 to 10 days. You may also find that your jaw muscles feel tired and achy from being held in their new position. Any discomfort usually subsides within a few days and pain-relieving medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen may be taken if required. Patience and soft food will help get you through this adjustment period.

Can the appliance come apart?

The arms of the Herbst telescope, meaning they move within each other and cannot come apart. However, the screws attaching the arms to the crowns can come undone. This usually occurs when they are being played with. If this does happen don't panic. It is not painful, just rather annoying. Please contact us so we can re-attach them for you.

How do I clean it?

As the Herbst appliance can be in place for up to 12 months it is important to keep it very clean. Brush around all parts of the appliance including the expander screw (if applicable). A clean appliance will be bright and shiny!

Dos and Don'ts:

- **Do** rinse your mouth with salt water if you have any ulcers (1 teaspoon in a glass of warm water)
- **Do** brush thoroughly around all the crowns and especially under the lower bars
- **Do** start by eating soft foods until your jaws and teeth adjust to the new positions.
- **Don't** eat hard or sticky food as this may dislodge the crowns. It is a lot of work to remove and recement a Herbst appliance, so eating the right food is essential.
- **Don't** play with the appliance with your tongue or fingers – this leads to breakages.
- **Don't** move your jaw excessively sideways.
- **Don't** fight the appliance – let your jaw move to where the Herbst is positioning it.

Whenever something new is placed in the mouth, it takes time to adjust. Please be patient—you will become accustomed to the appliance surprisingly soon.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us on 9687 8243.