



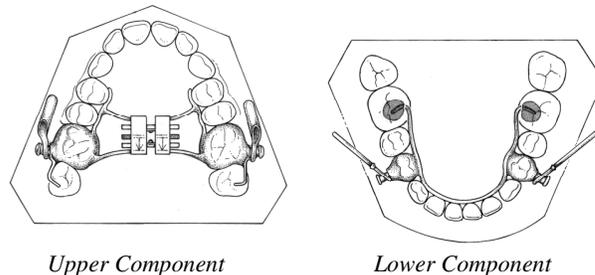
McNamara Orthodontics
Specialists in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics
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HERBST APPLIANCE

Patient Instructions

Today you or your child has been given a Herbst appliance. This orthopedic appliance helps correct jaw and tooth imbalances in which there is an underdevelopment of the lower jaw relative to the upper jaw. The Herbst appliance is usually worn for about 9 to 12 months, followed by an additional period of time in fixed orthodontic appliances (braces).

Although there are several variations in the construction of the Herbst appliance, most commonly it is attached to the teeth by stainless steel crowns with an expansion screw in the middle of the palate to help widen the upper jaw. A plunger extends from the upper component of the appliance to the lower component, and guides the lower jaw into a more forward position, stimulating lower jaw growth and thus decreasing the overbite.



Upper Component

Lower Component

Initially, the appliance may feel awkward and the back teeth may not fully touch. However, within a few days to one week, normal eating and function should return. Wax can be placed on the "screw" portion of the appliance if gum or cheek irritation is present. Some sensitivity of the back teeth may also be experienced. This adjustment period is to be expected and should last for a few days to a week. If the irritation persists, especially in the area of the upper back teeth, please contact our office.



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If the patient opens very wide (such as during a yawn), the top and bottom parts of the Herbst arms may come apart. They can be put back together by having the patient open wide again and sliding the lower plunger arm into the upper tubular arm. We can't leave the lower arm too long or it will start to poke the patient's cheeks when they close their mouth all of the way.

Follow up appointments will occur every four to eight weeks. These appointments should be very short in duration except when the appliance is activated. Since the Herbst appliance lies in contact with the teeth, extreme care must be taken with regard to oral hygiene. Particular attention should be taken to clean the area of the appliance adjacent to the gum tissue.

There is a fee for replacement of the Herbst appliance which is in addition to the regular treatment fee. Should replacement be necessary, new impressions would need to be taken. Please encourage your child to be very careful while wearing and handling the appliance. Avoid gum and sticky foods. A more complete explanation can be found in our "Brace Watchers Diet" handout. If you suspect that this appliance has become loose, or if you have any questions regarding treatment with the Herbst appliance, please do not hesitate to contact our office.