

## **CARE OF SPACE MAINTAINER**

Typically, children lose a baby tooth when a permanent tooth is ready to erupt. The pressure from the permanent tooth pushes out the baby tooth. Sometimes, however, children lose baby teeth early due to decay or injury. When this happens, the other baby teeth may shift to fill in the gap. By the time the permanent tooth is ready to erupt, there is no space. As a result, this permanent tooth will create a crooked and/or crowded smile, which can lead to difficulty speaking and chewing. Misaligned teeth are more difficult to clean, so your child is put at a greater risk for tooth decay.

We can stop this shift ahead of time with the use of a space maintainer. A space maintainer holds open the space left by a lost tooth by keeping the adjacent teeth in place. The spacer will be removed once the necessary permanent teeth have erupted. A variety of space maintainers are used. Examples include:

- Band-and-loop
- Lower lingual holding arch
- Nance
- Distal shoe

The type of spacer used is dependent upon the age of your child and the teeth missing. Following insertion of a space maintainer, your child must visit us every six months to check the condition of the device (and the rest of the teeth).

### **Care Instructions:**

- Child should avoid sticky foods, such as candy, gum, or popcorn that might accidentally loosen the spacer.
- Brush teeth as normal and clean the wires around the empty space properly every morning and night.
- Visit our office every 6 months to check the space maintainer

Call us at 512-451-8310 if you have any concerns.