

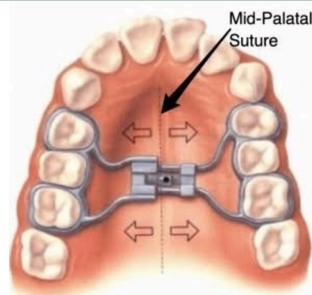
Understanding Palatal Expansion

A short guide to RPE & MARPE before you consent to treatment

This leaflet explains what palatal expansion is, why it may be recommended, and what to expect. Please read this alongside your discussion with Dr Jarred, and feel free to ask any questions before treatment begins.

What is palatal expansion?

The roof of the mouth (palate) is made of two halves joined by a suture down the middle. In growing patients especially, this suture can still be gently separated to widen a narrow upper jaw — creating more room for teeth, improving how the upper and lower teeth fit together, and in some cases improving nasal breathing. You may also hear this called RME (rapid maxillary expansion) or rapid palatal expansion.



The expander applies gentle pressure either side of the mid-palatal suture, widening it over time.

Types of expanders



Conventional tooth-borne RPE, anchored to the back teeth.



Bone-anchored MARPE, using mini-screws for cases needing more skeletal expansion.

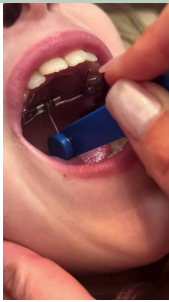
Which type is right for you depends on your age, growth stage, and how much expansion is needed — Dr Jarred will explain which option applies to your case specifically.

What you'll feel

A sensation of pressure or tightness is normal after each activation ("turn") of the appliance, usually easing within a few minutes to hours. Many patients also notice a gap opening up between the upper front teeth as the suture separates — this is expected, and typically closes on its own within around 3 months. Teeth are often a little sore for 3–5 days after the appliance is first fitted, similar to starting braces.

Caring for your expander

- The appliance is usually worn full-time for around 3–9 months in total — the first 2–3 weeks actively widen the jaw, and the remaining months allow new bone to fill the gap and consolidate.
- You'll be given a special key and shown how and how often to turn it — typically twice a day during the active widening phase.
- Clean gently around and underneath the appliance daily — food collects easily around the screw and bands, and poor cleaning here can leave permanent marks on your teeth.
- Avoid sticky or hard foods that could dislodge or damage the appliance, similar to caring for braces.
- Some initial difficulty with speech is common and typically improves within a few days as you adjust.



Inserting the key to activate ("turn") the appliance, exactly as shown to you.

If anything feels wrong, stop turning the key. Pause activation and contact us as soon as reasonably possible rather than waiting for your next routine visit — don't try to adjust or fix the appliance yourself.

Possible risks

- Temporary discomfort, pressure, or headache-like sensation after activation.
- Mild irritation of the tongue or cheeks against the appliance while settling in.
- The appliance can occasionally come loose (debond) from the teeth during use and need re-cementing.
- If the first round of expansion doesn't achieve enough width, a second round may be needed.
- In rare cases, the mid-palatal suture is already too fused (common with age) for the appliance to work as planned.
- A small risk of root resorption (see the braces leaflet for what this means) applies here too.
- With MARPE, similar risks to other mini-screws apply around the placement sites.

If you'd rather not proceed

Expansion is recommended when it will meaningfully improve your bite, breathing, or the space available for your teeth. Alternatives depend on your individual case — Dr Jarred will discuss what other approaches may be appropriate. The final decision is always yours.

Once widening is complete, a fixed retaining wire holds the new width while the bone consolidates, and further fixed brace treatment is usually needed afterward to straighten the teeth themselves.

Evidence-based approach

Specialist-led treatment

Individualised activation schedule

Consent acknowledgment

I confirm that I have read this leaflet and discussed palatal expansion as part of my orthodontic treatment with Dr Jarred Lee. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I understand the purpose, procedure, aftercare, and possible risks described above.

PATIENT NAME

DATE

PATIENT / GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

CLINICIAN SIGNATURE

This leaflet is for general patient education and does not replace individual clinical advice.