



“Changing the World, One Smile at a Time...”

## PHASE I – EXPANSION RETAINERS MANUAL

Our office is now almost completely paperless. This includes digital patient files, photographs, radiographs, treatment and administrative records.

We are also moving towards a completely digital/paperless system of patient communication. This includes use of email and text messaging for communication with doctors and patients. At some point we will discontinue using paper and letters as a form of communication.

**It is very important that you register yourself (or family where appropriate) on our website as soon as you arrive home if you have not done so already. For now this will be the hub of communication.**

After registering you will be able to conduct business with our office online. This will include checking your appointment information, reviewing your personal and insurance ledger and soon you will be able to pay your statement online.

Once registered, you will also be able to receive appointment reminders and information bulletins by email and/or text message.

The registration process is easy. Logon to our website at [newhartorthodontics.com](http://newhartorthodontics.com) or [drnewhart.com](http://drnewhart.com) and click on Patient Login on the Main Page. Then simply register. Call our office if you need assistance.

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## Newhart Orthodontics Phase I – Expansion Retainers

### Your First Day

The first goal that we set for your child is getting used to wearing the expansion retainers. Some parents prefer that their children begin wearing the retainer full time immediately and others like to begin more slowly. There is no "right way". However, the goal is for your child to be wearing the retainers full time (except while eating) after the first week.

### General Soreness

When they are new, all orthodontic appliances initially feel like they "stick out." This is normal. As your child becomes accustomed to their Expansion Retainers, this sensation will go away. Although the appliances we use have been rounded and smoothed, some children have some soreness beginning during the first eight hours and dissipating in 2-7 days. Non-prescription pain remedies may be used at your discretion for discomfort. They should be taken as soon as possible after your appliances have been placed.

### Before Leaving the Office

There are routine steps that we ask you to take prior to leaving the office after each office visit:

1. Using your finger and tongue, check that the expansion retainers comfortable. Also make sure that they are fitting snugly without rocking. We want the retainers to be tight enough so that they do not fall out while speaking, but loose enough so that they may be taken in and out by your child. They should have a definite "click into place" feel to them.
2. Make sure you understand what you are to do until your next visit. This could include activating expanders or following specific hygiene or diet instructions. Typically, the expansion retainers are to be activated once each week. For consistency, we recommend that an adult does the activation and on the same day each week.
3. **Always schedule your next appointment before leaving the office.** Waiting for 2 weeks after an appointment to schedule your office visit complicates the scheduling process. Postponing appointments is a common contributor to extended treatment.
4. Make sure that all of your questions about treatment are answered. Treatment goes better when everyone understands the treatment process.



## Eating and Potential Harm to your Orthodontic Appliances

Two types of food tend to cause harm to your orthodontic appliance: hard foods and sticky foods. Generally speaking, we recommend that expansion retainers be removed while eating and placed into the carry case that was provided to you. Your child's first name (not last name) and telephone number should be written on the case before leaving the office. Most retainers are lost while eating in restaurants. If your child develops a habit of always keeping the retainers in their mouth or the case, they will minimize the chances of being lost during treatment. Lost and broken appliances cause delays and extra office visits; if you need help on developing a plan for your child, please ask any of the staff members at Newhart Orthodontics.

## Repairs and Emergencies

Dental emergencies, whether or not your child is under orthodontic care, fall into two categories:

### 1. DIRECT INJURIES TO THE MOUTH OR TEETH

Following a direct injury to your mouth or teeth, whether undergoing orthodontic care or not, you should be seen by your regular dentist as soon as possible. Usually a radiograph of the involved tooth, or teeth, is needed to ascertain the extent of injury. If a tooth has been knocked out, severely displaced or fractured, it is best to contact your family dentist first, since we may not have the necessary materials needed to treat these injuries. If the orthodontic appliances are damaged, we will need to repair or adjust them as soon as possible. If in doubt, do not wear the expansion retainers until Dr. Newhart inspects them.

Please call our office immediately after seeing your family dentist. If you are unable to reach your family dentist or an alternate emergency facility, call this office and we will assist you in locating someone to care for the injury. Please discuss potential emergency procedures with your family dentist at your next visit to their office.

### 2. EMERGENCIES RELATED TO ORTHODONTIC APPLIANCES

Broken or disturbed appliances are likely to occur from time to time during your orthodontic care. If there is any disturbance such as broken clasps or broken acrylic, call our office as soon as possible so we can evaluate the urgency of the problem and schedule you to be seen accordingly. If you need assistance outside business hours, please call our office and our answering machine will give you instructions on what to do and whom to call.

**IN THE INTERIM, THE FOLLOWING ARE HELPFUL HINTS TO REMEDY SOME OF THE PROBLEMS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER UNTIL YOU CAN BE SEEN IN OUR OFFICE:**

- A removable appliance that is not fitting well is not to be worn until it can be properly adjusted in our office.
- A removable appliance that is fitting well, such as a broken clasp or small break in the acrylic should continue to be worn until the next office visit.

## Oral Hygiene and Diet as it Relates to Decay, Decalcification and Gingivitis

Food left on the teeth and gum line after eating feeds bacteria which cause plaque to form. Plaque causes cavities (tooth decay), decalcification (white marks on teeth) and gingivitis or gum disease (swollen, puffy, red, overgrown or bleeding gums). Since the expansion retainers fit against the teeth and gums, it is important to keep the retainers as clean as the mouth. Retainers should be cleaned with a tooth brush and tooth paste and lots of water. Additional aids like Efferdent and other oral appliance cleaners may be used, but are not required. The following are recommended guidelines and tools to be used in cleaning your gums and teeth:

To maintain healthy teeth while wearing orthodontic appliances and to reduce the possibility of decay, decalcification and inflammation of the gums, please follow these recommendations:

1. **The best preventive measure is excellent oral hygiene.** This includes brushing with fluoride toothpaste for at least three minutes after breakfast and before going to bed. A regular soft bristled tooth brush will do well, but we highly recommend the Sonicare electric toothbrush. The parent should look to make sure that all food debris and plaque have been totally removed.
2. **Fluoride is a very important part of the prevention program.** Fluoride will attach to any weakened enamel and strengthen it. Based on recent research, we are recommending that after brushing with fluoride toothpaste and rinsing, before going to bed, rinse with a fluoride mouthwash. Hold for 60 seconds then spit, but do not rinse. The idea is to **LEAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF FLUORIDE ON YOUR TEETH ALL NIGHT**. This nightly light fluoride treatment will definitely help prevent decay, decalcification and gingivitis.
3. **Minimize eating foods with high fructose corn syrup, sucrose and other sugars.** All candy is in this category as well as many juices. The bacteria that cause decay, decalcification and gingivitis utilize the fermentable carbohydrates as their food. The more sugar, the higher the bacterial count and the more likely problems will occur.
4. **Minimize or avoid drinking soft drinks.** There is strong evidence that the acid from carbonated soft drinks contributes to the breakdown of enamel.
5. **It is very important to continue with regular professional cleaning with your general dentist.** You should see your dentist at 6 month intervals for recall visits unless they would like to see you more frequently. This will depend on your own skill and your existing periodontal condition. Your dentist will also check you for decay or other problems that may arise during treatment. If you need a referral for a general dentist, please ask us and we will assist you in finding someone for you.

The rewards of orthodontic treatment – straight teeth, a beautiful smile and a healthy mouth, are achievable goals for all of our patients, young and old alike. We need your help to make sure the teeth and the gums are also bright, shiny and healthy at the completion of treatment. By following the instructions provided in this handout, you will have the best chance of having a truly outstanding result. We can't do it without you! My staff and I personally look forward to taking care of you.

**“Changing the World, One Smile at a Time” --- Dr. Scott Newhart**