

Herbst Appliance Instructions

The appliance that has been placed in your mouth is a growth appliance. It is designed to assist you in changing the way your jaws line up with each other. With its use, we are attempting to change your skeletal pattern through growth.

As with any orthodontic appliance, you have to be very careful with it. If you eat things that are too hard or tough, or if you bite on things that are hard, you risk damaging the appliance. The Herbst is a very durable, but not indestructible, appliance. A damaged Herbst appliance can be very difficult to repair once it has been glued in your mouth. Removing it, or a portion of it, from your mouth to repair or replace it can be difficult. So please, be very careful with your appliance. While chewing, there are strong forces on your Herbst bands, so it is possible that bands may loosen. Be careful to not use too much force while chewing.

When you first get your appliance, there is an adjustment period. You will need to be patient as your mouth gets use to your new appliance and the tissue toughens. Your tongue is very curious; it will play with the new appliance a lot at first. So expect the tongue, and even the cheeks and lips, to get a little sore. As time goes on, the tissue toughens and your lips, cheeks and tongue learn to leave things alone. Do not let your cheek play with the front screw. Avoid sleeping on the side of your face since this pressure pushes the cheek into the screw head. Pressure like this on the cheeks could create a large sore, or ulcer, that could take weeks to heal!

At first, your back teeth will not come together and only the front teeth may hit. For a while, eating and swallowing will tend to be awkward and frustrating. This could last 7-10 days, so please be patient. Patience and soft foods will get you through this. If you had to survive on milk shakes, yogurt, and soup for a week, you would be okay.

With your appliance in place, you can open and close normally. However, do not try to move your lower jaw sideways very much at all. If you force your jaw sideways, you risk breaking the screw head off the top or bottom part of the appliance. If this were to happen, it would have to be removed and remade.

Avoid excessively opening your mouth. If you open too wide, the shafts on the Herbst appliance may come apart. If this does happen, just open widely again and attempt to put the two ends back together, then close. You will have to work a little to get the ends to meet. When you try to close with the ends aligned, you may have to wiggle your jaw a little bit as you close to get the shafts to slide together.

Your appliance will be in your mouth for several months. Please take good care of it. Remember to brush your teeth, the bands, and the wires very well. If your brushing is not adequate, you can get cavities or white scars on your teeth.