



Our #1 Question from Concerned Parents is:
“Does My Child Need a Palatal Expander?”

MOST OF THE TIME, RHODS ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST'S ANSWER IS “NO,” which is a pleasant surprise for most parents who may have been told that their child will need an expander. In fact, research shows that only 8% of children have the type of bite that an expander can correct.

So what does an expander do for those children who benefit from one?

Palatal expanders widen an upper jaw that is too narrow, which is important when there is a discrepancy between the width of the upper and lower jaws (a crossbite).

Unfortunately, we commonly hear about expanders being used in Phase 1 orthodontic treatment for a variety of things that they are not effective at correcting. Some common examples include “creating room” for crowded teeth, “preventing the need to have teeth pulled,” or “improving breathing.” In the era of evidence-based orthodontics, the scientific research in peer-reviewed journals to support these claims simply does not exist.

The research-supported indications for the use of palatal expanders are limited and clear.

Indications for use: Simply put, if the upper jaw is too narrow and is in crossbite with the lower jaw, an expander can make it wider.

Expander use that is NOT supported by evidence

Expander use not indicated: In cases of severe crowding, the jaw circumference is too small. Widening the jaw only increases the circumference a minimal, insignificant amount which will not affect the ability to fit all of the teeth into the correct position. The necessary space can be gained with braces more quickly and comfortably. Therefore, the use of expansion for crowded teeth is not indicated and will not provide a benefit to your child. *If palatal expansion is recommended for your child, be sure to ask what research supports its use.*

Are there negative consequences to expansion when it is not indicated?

Unnecessary expansion can lead to a number of future complications including loss of supporting bone and gum tissue. In extreme cases, aggressive expansion, especially in very



young children, can even widen the face and bridge of the nose.

So do you, at Rhoads Orthodontic, recommend expansion?

We absolutely do, *when it is needed*. Dr. Rhoads treats patients with upper jaws that are too narrow and in crossbite with the lower jaw using palatal expanders.

Every patient is unique and deserves dedicated time spent by the orthodontist to develop an individualized, patient-specific treatment plan. As a board certified

orthodontist, Dr. Rhoads specializes in treating all types of bite problems, and most of them can be corrected without the use of an expander. We pride ourselves on providing personalized, efficient and conservative care for you and your child. *We treat you the same way we would treat our family members!*

If I have had an evaluation or Phase 1 treatment elsewhere, can I still be seen in your office for a consultation?

Absolutely! We are always happy to answer any questions or provide you with a second opinion on a recommended treatment plan. If you suspect that you or your child has a bite misalignment, we encourage you to come in for a complimentary consultation and begin your journey to a confident, healthy smile today!

Call 724.742.2300 for your complimentary initial exam and start smiling confidently today! www.rhoadsorthodontics.com



This **Industry Insight** was written by Dr. Stephanie Rhoads, DMD, MBE, MS. Board Certified Orthodontist

Dr. Stephanie Rhoads attended the University of Pittsburgh for her undergraduate education. Subsequently, she received her D.M.D. and M.B.E. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2010, where she was inducted as a member of the Omicron Kappa Upsilon Dental Honor Society. She then completed a

three-year residency in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Rhoads is a Board Certified Orthodontist practicing in Cranberry Twp., Pa., at Rhoads Orthodontic Specialist.

A place where beautiful, confident smiles are created!

132 Graham Park Dr. Suite 300 Cranberry Twp., PA 16066 724.742.2300