

Thumb Crib

Information Guide

WHAT IS A THUMB CRIB?

Persistent finger or thumb sucking habits can interfere with eruption of the teeth and lead to bite disturbances. A Thumb Crib is an orthodontic appliance designed to help children cease a thumb or finger sucking habit. Eliminating these habits can lead to a significant improvement in tooth position.



APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

Thumb cribs are custom made for each patient. This means a few appointments are required before the thumb crib is inserted:

Appointment 1: Separators (5 mins)

Separators are placed on either side of the upper molar teeth to make space for the bands. They should remain there until the next appointment.

Appointment 2: Band Fit and Impression (20 mins)

The separators are removed and a band is fitted around the upper molar teeth. An impression is taken of the teeth and bands. There are sent to our lab technician who custom makes the thumb crib. New separators are inserted.

Appointment 3: Inserting the Thumb Crib (30 mins)

At this appointment the separators are removed, the teeth polished and the thumb crib is cemented to the teeth. Care instructions are also given.

CARING FOR THE THUMB CRIB

Teeth should be cleaned every morning and night with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Brush the thumb crib at the same time, taking care to remove any food that may be caught around it. It should look shiny if it has been cleaned well!

WHAT CAN I EAT?

Sweet and acidic food and drinks are best avoided, as they can damage the teeth. It is also important to avoid eating hard or sticky foods, as they may cause the thumb crib to break or loosen.

ADJUSTING TO LIFE WITH A THUMB CRIB

When the thumb crib is first fitted, talking, eating and drinking can be somewhat challenging. These things will improve quickly as your child adapts to the appliance. To speed up the adaption process your child can:

- Take small sips of water from a drink bottle to help with tongue placement during swallowing.
- Cut food up into smaller pieces when eating.
- Reading out loud (or simply talk a lot) to help with pronunciation.

A MESSAGE FOR CARERS

Many children suck their thumb or finger for comfort. Placement of the thumb crib makes thumb or finger sucking difficult, so expect to have a few unsettled nights and possible tears from your child.

As this is a passive appliance, we don't expect extended dental discomfort. However, mild pain relieving medication can be taken, if required.

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