

Space Maintainers

Overview

A patient asked recently, "What's a space maintainer?" I told him this can be vital to your child's dental health.

If your child loses a baby tooth early through decay or injury, the child's other teeth could shift and begin to fill the vacant space. When your child's permanent teeth emerge, there's not enough room for them. The result is crooked or crowded teeth and difficulties with chewing or speaking.

To prevent that, your dentist inserts a space maintainer to hold the spot left by the lost tooth until the permanent tooth emerges. The space maintainer might be a band or a temporary crown attached to one side of the vacant space. Later, as the permanent tooth emerges, your dentist removes the device. And presto! Your child is ready for a lifetime of smiles.