



**MENAI**  
**ORTHODONTICS**

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## Herbst Appliance Information Sheet

In this information sheet, we've outlined everything you need to know about a Herbst appliance, including what it is, how it works, and much more.

### What is a Herbst appliance?

The Herbst appliance is made up of four stainless steel crowns covering the two upper and two lower back molar teeth. Two metal cylinders are attached to the upper crowns and two metal bars, running parallel to your lower back teeth, are attached to the lower crowns. Two rods or arms slide into the sleeves hanging down from the upper crowns. If you look at the images below you'll see how the Herbst appliance is fitted to the teeth.



### How does a Herbst appliance work?

The Herbst appliance works by using the metal sleeves and rods (referred to as 'arms') to promote natural jaw and muscle growth, allowing a better balance to be achieved between the upper and lower jaws. A Herbst appliance is most effective when used during peak growth periods. A Herbst appliance is fixed in the mouth and worn 24 hours per day until the desired result is achieved.

### Is it hard getting used to a Herbst appliance?

As with all orthodontic appliances, a Herbst appliance can take a little getting used to. For the first week or so after the initial fitting, you can expect a little discomfort. However, it shouldn't interfere with opening and closing your mouth or with eating. That said, be sure to take care when eating to prevent breakages. As a precaution during the initial days after fitting, eat soft foods or cut food into bite-sized pieces. Be aware the lower bar of the Herbst appliance can irritate the cheek or lip in the lowerfront corner of your mouth.

Place cotton rolls there to cushion the area for the first one or two days. You may also find the metal attachments on the outside of the upper stainless steel crowns can rub the cheek in the back of the mouth. Apply wax to these areas, especially in the first three nights after fitting.

You may notice excess saliva accumulating in your mouth. Don't worry! This is completely normal. Additionally, tenderness around your teeth and even in some cheek muscles and jaw joints may be experienced. All symptoms should subside within the first week of wearing the appliance. Ibuprofen may be used to ease pain and discomfort, if required.

## How do I care for my Herbst appliance?

As with all orthodontic appliances, the best care involves eating the correct foods and maintaining good oral hygiene. During treatment avoid sweet, sticky and sugary foods, as well as anything too crunchy. These foods increase the risk of decay and can also loosen the appliance. Brush your teeth and your appliance at least twice daily, brushing around teeth and then around the appliance, ensuring the molar bands, tubes and rods are cleaned thoroughly. It's helpful to rinse after meals and snacks too as this removes any food that may get caught on the appliance.

## What if my Herbst appliance breaks?

Nobody likes breakages, however if your appliance does come loose, call the practice as soon as possible. We will schedule an appointment to repair it as soon as possible. If you have yawned or opened your mouth too wide and the arm comes out of the tube, simply open wide and thread the arm back into the tube as you slowly close your mouth.

## What happens after the Herbst appliance?

The purpose of the Herbst appliance is to modify jaw growth, not straighten teeth. Once jaw growth has been modified, upper and lower braces will be required to align teeth and bite to achieve a sound functional and aesthetic result.

Sometimes braces and the Herbst appliance are done simultaneously, however this is determined according to the needs of each individual.

For further information regarding care for your Herbst appliance, please refer to the Resources section of our website at <https://www.menaiortho.com.au/> or call us on (02) 9543 3680.