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PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY & ORTHODONTICS

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Distal Shoe Appliance

Second primary molars typically exfoliate around 12 years of age. When lost prematurely, it is necessary to hold open the space left behind by the primary molar. The permanent teeth will be unable to come in properly if the space is not maintained.

Eruption of the first permanent molars usually occurs between ages 6 and 7. When a second primary molar is lost before eruption of the permanent molar, the distal shoe appliance must be used as a spacer. This allows guided eruption of the permanent molar.

Distal shoe appliances require a stainless steel crown on the first primary molar. A metal extension runs distally along the space and the end is positioned beneath gum tissue. This guides the permanent molar into its correct position. The appliance can be accomplished in a single visit.

When the eruption of the permanent molar is achieved, the distal shoe is replaced with a band and loop or lower lingual arch appliance at the doctor's discretion. It is removed around age 11 or 12 upon eruption of the second premolar. This sequence of space maintainers helps prevent an orthodontic problem with the eruption of permanent teeth.

