

THINKING ABOUT GETTING INVISALIGN?

What Is Invisalign and How Does It Work?

What are aligners made of, and what do they look like? The virtually invisible aligners, which are made of a thermoplastic material uniquely developed for the Invisalign treatment plan, look similar to teeth-whitening trays. A series of Invisalign aligners are custom-made for you, to move your teeth in the sequence determined by your doctor.

- **How do the aligners straighten teeth?**

Over the course of treatment, you will be supplied with a series of aligners. Each aligner will make slight adjustments to tooth position, a process that is mapped out in advance by your doctor, specifically for your situation. When the aligners are placed on the teeth, they cause the teeth to gradually shift from their current position. After approximately two weeks, you will begin using the next set of aligners, which will continue the teeth straightening process.

- **How will Invisalign effectively move my teeth?**

Through the use of our patented thermoplastic design, Invisalign aligners move your teeth through the appropriate placement of controlled force. The main difference is that Invisalign not only controls the force, but also the timing of the force application. During each stage, only certain teeth are allowed to move. These movements are determined by your doctor as he or she maps out your unique Invisalign treatment plan.

What are the primary benefits of Invisalign?

Invisalign aligners are virtually invisible. No one may even notice that you're wearing them, making Invisalign a seamless fit with your lifestyle. Invisalign aligners are removable. For the best results and a timely outcome, aligners should be worn for 20 to 22 hours per day.

However, unlike with braces, you have the flexibility to remove your aligners to eat and drink what you want during treatment. And you can also remove the aligners to brush and floss as you normally would, for fresh breath and good oral hygiene. There are no metal brackets or wires that could cause irritation to your mouth, an advantage over traditional braces. Plus, since your office visits during treatment don't involve metal or wire adjustments, you'll likely spend less time in the doctor's chair. Invisalign allows you to view your virtual results and treatment plan before you start so you can see how your straightened teeth will look when your treatment is complete. Instead of imagining how much better it can be, you'll be able to see it for yourself.

What Is the Treatment Process?

- **How long will treatment take?**

The length of treatment depends on the severity of your case and can only be determined by your doctor; however, the average case takes about 12 months for adults. The length of time necessary for a teen patient may vary and can be determined by your doctor.

- **How do I get started with Invisalign?**

It's simple – first take our Smile Assessment to see if Invisalign is right for you. Next make an appointment with an Invisalign Provider. Many doctors offer free initial consultations. For the best experience, take the time to find the “right” doctor, one whom you feel comfortable with, and who has experience treating cases like yours. As with other important medical decisions, sometimes it is worthwhile to seek out a second or even third opinion. Use our Find A Doctor feature to find the most experienced Invisalign-trained Provider near you. Make sure you trust your smile to an experienced doctor who uses the latest techniques.

- **Can I go to any dentist to be treated with Invisalign?**

All dentists interested in treating patients with Invisalign must attend and complete specialized instructional sessions to become trained Invisalign Providers.

In addition, doctors must regularly submit treatment results for review and complete ongoing clinical training classes to earn the designation “Preferred Provider.” Use our Find A Doctor feature to find the most experienced Invisalign Provider near you. Doctors designated as Premier Preferred Providers have a greater level of case experience. Those labeled Elite Preferred Provider have the highest level of case experience.

- **How often must I wear my aligners?**

We find that aligners are most effective when worn 20 to 22 hours per day and removed only for eating, brushing and flossing.

- **How often must I see my Invisalign doctor?**

Your doctor will schedule regular appointments usually about once every four to six weeks. The goal of these visits is to ensure that your treatment is progressing as planned.

My provider mentioned “attachments”?

What are they and why would I need them for my Invisalign treatment?

Depending on your specific treatment, some of the movements may require either “attachments” or “ridges” to help the aligner grip the teeth. These bumps, or wells, are where the aligner grips the attachment the doctor places on your teeth.

The attachments are actually small pieces of enamel-colored composite the doctor affixes to your teeth that are then gripped by bumps on your aligners. The ridges are slim indentations in your aligners. Your doctor will use one or both of these features to attempt to achieve the desired tooth movement.

How Will It Affect My Life?

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Will Invisalign treatment be painful?

While Invisalign moves your teeth without the pain and anxiety metal braces can cause, some people experience temporary discomfort for a few days at the beginning of each new stage of treatment. This is normal and is typically described as a feeling of pressure. It's also a sign that Invisalign is working, as it moves your teeth to their final destination.' This discomfort typically goes away in a couple of days.

How long will treatment take?

The length of treatment depends on the severity of your case and can only be determined by your doctor; however, the average case takes about 12 months for adults. The length of time necessary for a teen patient may vary and can be determined by your doctor.

Can I just wear the aligners while I sleep?

No. The aligners must be in place a minimum of 20 to 22 hours a day for the treatment to be effective.

Will wearing Invisalign aligners affect my speech?

Similar to other orthodontic treatments, Invisalign aligners may temporarily affect the speech of some people, and you may have a slight lisp for a day or two. However, as your tongue gets used to having aligners in your mouth, any lisp caused by the aligners should disappear.

Are there restrictions as to what I can eat while in treatment?

No. Thanks to the removable nature of the aligners, you can eat and drink whatever you want while in treatment. In fact, you're required to remove your aligners to eat and drink. So, unlike when undergoing traditional treatment using wires and brackets, there is no need to restrict your consumption of any of your favorite foods and snacks unless you are instructed otherwise by your doctor.

Also, it is important that you brush your teeth after each meal and prior to reinserting your aligners to maintain fresh breath and proper hygiene.

Will smoking stain the aligners?

We discourage smoking while wearing aligners because it is possible for the aligners to become discolored,

- **Can I drink alcohol with the aligners in?**

Because of the high sugar content in alcohol, a moderate amount would be fine to consume, as long as care is taken to clean the teeth and the aligners soon after so as not to trap sugar between them. The same applies for any sugary beverage.

- **Can I chew gum while wearing aligners?**

No, gum will stick to the aligners. We recommend removing your aligners for all meals and snacks.

- **How often must I wear my aligners?**

We find that aligners are most effective when worn 20 to 22 hours per day and removed only for eating, brushing and flossing.

How often must I see my Invisalign doctor?

Your doctor will schedule regular appointments usually about once every four to six weeks. These visits aim to ensure that your treatment is progressing as planned.

Can the aligners slip off while I'm asleep?

It is very unlikely that your aligners would ever fall out, no matter what you were doing at the time: sleeping, talking, laughing, etc. The aligners are designed to fit firmly on the teeth, so this should not be a cause for concern.

Why should I feel confident about Invisalign?

- **How many patients have been treated with Invisalign?**

More than 4 million patients worldwide have been treated with Invisalign. The number of Invisalign smiles grows daily

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- **Do Invisalign aligners contain Bisphenol-A (BPA)?**

No. Invisalign aligners and Vivera Retainers do not contain Bisphenol-A or phthalate plasticizers. These aligners and retainers are made with USP Class VI

medical-grade, high molecular weight, polyurethane resins. Tests have been conducted to determine the biocompatibility of these materials, and show that they are biocompatible and pass all applicable regulatory requirements and thresholds for human wear in the mouth. Of course, as with any medical device, you should consult with your health professional about your aligner or retainer treatment and any applicable risks of use.

- **How old is the company?**

Align Technology, Inc., the company that manufactures Invisalign, was founded in 1997.

Has the FDA cleared Invisalign?

Invisalign aligners are classified as Class II medical devices by the FDA, and Align Technology, Inc, received the necessary 510K clearance from the FDA to be able to sell and market the Invisalign system in 1998.

How Do I Take Care of My Aligners?

- **What's the best way to clean my aligners?**

The best way to clean your aligners is to use the Invisalign Cleaning system, available for order at www.invisalignstore.com. As a secondary method, however, your aligners can also be cleaned by brushing them and rinsing them in lukewarm water.

What Happens After Treatment Is Completed?

- **Will I need to wear a retainer after treatment to prevent my teeth from moving again?**

Most doctors recommend that anyone who has completed orthodontic treatment, whether braces or Invisalign treatment, use a retainer to prevent teeth from gradually shifting back toward their initial position. Because every case is

different, please speak to your doctor to confirm if you need post-treatment retainers and if they are needed for both upper and lower teeth.

- **What type of retainer should I use?**

While there are many different types of retainers, we recommend Vivera® retainers. Vivera's proprietary material is 30% stronger than other leading clear retainer materials, which helps maintain your teeth in the final position. Because the retainers are custom-made from an impression or scan of your teeth using the same state-of-the-art technology as Invisalign clear aligners, you will benefit from a more precise and comfortable fit. What is the cost of Vivera® retainers?

The price is established by your Invisalign provider and may vary based on your geographic location. You will receive a set of four retainers, so you can have an extra pair in case they are lost and/or misplaced. How do I order Vivera retainers?

What if I've had braces, or have other special dental conditions?

- **I am currently wearing braces. Can I make the switch to Invisalign?**

Doctors are treating a significant number of patients with a combination of braces and Invisalign. Consult your Invisalign doctor to determine the best treatment for you.

- **Since having my braces removed, my teeth have shifted. Can Invisalign fix this?**

A number of Invisalign patients have undergone a previous treatment involving braces at some point in their past, often during their youth. Adults can usually have the shifting that occurs after braces are corrected, without having to go through the trauma and social awkwardness of wearing metal braces.

- **I currently have veneers. Will Invisalign aligners work with them?**

Please consult with your Invisalign Provider about any special orthodontic cases, such as veneers.

- **I currently have bridgework on several teeth. Will Invisalign still work?**

Because bridgework involves the connection of a tooth to surrounding teeth, it would be difficult for the aligners to work effectively. The aligners are designed to move each tooth separately, following the exact movements that your orthodontist will map out for you when creating your custom-made aligners.

What Are the Costs and Payment Options?

- **How much does Invisalign cost?**

We know cost is a big question for anyone considering orthodontic work. In most cases, Invisalign treatment is comparable to the cost of traditional braces.

However, as with other medical treatments, only your Invisalign-trained doctor can determine the cost, based on your specific needs. Other factors may include your treatment goals, the difficulty of your case, how long you are in treatment, where you live, and additional factors determined by your dentist or orthodontist. Also, check your dental insurance plan- Invisalign treatment is covered by many dental insurance policies. And many doctors can offer flexible and affordable monthly payment plans as well.

- **Will my insurance cover Invisalign?**

Because medical benefits differ significantly from policy to policy, you should review your personal coverage plan. However, in general, if a patient has orthodontic coverage, Invisalign should be covered to the same extent as conventional braces.

- **What payment options are available for Invisalign?**

Most doctors will help you find options to make your treatment affordable. Many offices offer flexible and affordable monthly payment plans. Many doctors also offer financing through CareCredit. Specifically designed for health-care expenses, CareCredit is a third-party patient financing program that makes it easier for you to get the treatment or procedures you want and need.