



frequently asked questions



What is Invisalign®?

The Invisalign® system is the virtually invisible way to straighten your teeth and achieve the smile you've always dreamed of. Using advanced 3-D computer-imaging technology, Invisalign depicts your complete treatment plan, from the initial position of your teeth to the final desired position. Then a series of clear aligners are custom-made for your teeth – and your teeth only – to move them little by little. Each aligner is worn for about two weeks before being replaced by the next in the series, until the final position of your teeth is achieved. Your Invisalign treatment time will be determined by your doctor, based on your specific needs.

What are the primary benefits of Invisalign?

Invisalign aligners are practically clear. No one may even notice that you're wearing these virtually invisible "braces," making Invisalign a seamless fit with your lifestyle and day-to-day interactions with others.

Invisalign is removable. Unlike braces, you have the flexibility to eat and drink what you want during treatment by simply removing the aligners. And you can also remove the aligners to brush and floss as you normally would for fresh breath and good oral hygiene.

Unlike braces, there are no metal brackets or wires with the Invisalign system that could cause irritation to your mouth. 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.

How many patients are being treated with Invisalign?

Almost 4,000,000 patients worldwide have been treated with Invisalign. The number of Invisalign smiles grows daily.

How will Invisalign effectively move my teeth?

Like brackets and arch wires are to braces, Invisalign aligners move teeth through the appropriate placement of controlled force on your teeth. The main difference is that Invisalign not only controls forces, 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 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 tooth-whitening trays. Invisalign aligners are custom-made for you and only you to move your teeth in the sequence determined by your doctor. Invisalign aligners and Vivera Retainers do not contain Bisphenol-A or phthalate plasticizers.

Since having my braces removed, my teeth have shifted. Can Invisalign correct this?

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

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 on 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 undergoing traditional treatment using wires and brackets, there is no need to restrict your consumption of any of your favorite foods and snacks unless instructed otherwise by your doctor. Also, it is important that you brush your teeth after each meal and prior to re-inserting 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 chew gum while wearing aligners?

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

Will Invisalign treatment be painful?

While Invisalign moves your teeth without the pain and anxiety of metal braces, some people will 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.

What's the best way to clean my aligners?

The best way to clean your aligners is to use the Invisalign cleaning kit, 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 cool water.

How often must I wear my aligners?

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

How often must I see the Invisalign doctor?

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

What is the minimum age of a patient that a doctor can treat with Invisalign®?

Invisalign Teen is appropriate for patients who have shed all of their baby teeth and have second molars at least partially erupted – this includes most teens.

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.*

What happens after treatment to prevent my teeth from moving again?

This varies person to person and depends on the outcome of the treatment. Some patients might need a positioner, or conventional retainer. Other patients might need a clear plastic retainer similar to the ones Invisalign makes, such as Align Technology's Vivera Retainer, (www.viveraretainer.com).

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.

*Data on file at Align Technology, Inc.