

FAQ about Invisalign®

What is Invisalign®?

The Invisalign System™ is a breakthrough in orthodontics that straightens adult teeth using a series of clear, removable, nearly invisible plastic or medical-grade polymer appliances called "aligners."

How does Invisalign work?

Invisalign uses 3-D computer imaging technology to depict the complete treatment plan from the initial position to the final desired position from which a series of custom-made "aligners" are produced. Each "aligner" moves teeth incrementally and is worn for about two weeks, then replaced by the next in the series until the final position is achieved.

What are the primary benefits of Invisalign?

Aesthetically pleasing: clear "aligners" are nearly undetectable to others.

More hygienic: "aligners" are removable for brushing and flossing which helps promote healthy teeth and helps prevent gum disease.

Comfortable and effective: unlike traditional braces, there are no wires, metal or brackets so there is less abrasion in the mouth. Additionally, the system works in approximately the same amount of time as traditional braces.

What do "aligners" look like?

Nearly invisible "aligners" look similar to clear tooth-whitening trays but are custom-made for a better fit to move teeth. Some orthodontists have referred to them as "contact lenses for teeth."

Is this a new way to straighten teeth?

While orthodontists have been using removable appliances for very limited treatment (one or two teeth requiring movement) for years, it is the application of breakthrough technology that allows the Invisalign System to treat a much broader range of cases with greater precision.

Who uses Invisalign?

In its first year of introduction to the orthodontic community and consumer public, nearly half of the 8500 orthodontists in the U.S. have been trained to use the Invisalign System with a patient base of thousands.

Where is Invisalign available?

In the U.S. and Canada.

Is Invisalign FDA approved?

Yes, the Invisalign System has FDA clearance meeting all medical device specifications.

How much does Invisalign cost?

As with traditional braces, the cost of the Invisalign System depends on the complexity of treatment and on the treating orthodontist who decides what to charge the patient. To date, pricing of the Invisalign System has ranged from being comparable to braces to being priced at a premium.

How effective is the Invisalign system?

Ongoing clinical studies have shown the Invisalign System is effective in treating mild to moderate crowding and space closure cases, which represents 40% – 60% of all adult cases.

Can the Invisalign System be used to treat children?

At present, the Invisalign System is only appropriate for patients with full adult development and complete jaw growth. The age cut-off depends on the individual, but is generally ages 15 to 17 for girls and 17 to 19 for boys.

Who produces/designs Invisalign?

Align Technology, Inc, headquartered in Sunnyvale, CA, designs, manufactures and distributes the Invisalign System.

How does Invisalign work?

1. The patient meets with an Invisalign-certified orthodontist who takes an impression and x-rays of the patient's teeth, fills out an Invisalign prescription form and sends the impression, x-rays and prescription to the Align Technology lab.
2. At Align's lab, a mold is poured of the patient's teeth and digitized. Align uses its proprietary computer software to generate a start-to-finish 3-D movie that shows the series of movements of the patient's teeth from the current position to the desired final position.
3. The orthodontist reviews and approves the 3-D movie on Align's website (www.invisalign.com) and from these images, Align Technology produces a series of clear, plastic "aligners."
4. The patient wears each stage of "aligners" (usually consisting of a pair, one on the upper teeth and one on the lower) for approximately two weeks before switching to the next in the series. Week by week, the patient's teeth are straightened; millimeter by millimeter. Total treatment time is similar to traditional braces and usually ranges from 6 to 24 months depending on the complexity of the case.