



Invisalign® - Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

What is Invisalign?

Invisalign is the invisible new way to straighten teeth without braces. Invisalign uses a series of clear, removable aligners to gradually straighten teeth, without metal or wires. It combines 21st century technology and revolutionary manufacturing to customise a treatment for each individual patient.

Does Invisalign really work?

Yes. In both clinical research and in orthodontic and dental practices around the world, Invisalign has been proven effective at straightening teeth. Over a million patients have either been treated or are in treatment and over 44,000 orthodontists and dentists have been trained on how to use Invisalign.

Does Invisalign work as well as normal braces?

In most cases, Invisalign has proven to be as effective at straightening teeth as traditional braces. The level of Invisalign experience will determine how an orthodontist or dentist decides how to treat a patient, be it with Invisalign or traditional braces. Some severe cases may require treatment using Invisalign together with another teeth straightening technique.

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.

Where can I see pictures of actual finished Invisalign cases?

To see what just a few of the many thrilled patients are saying about Invisalign, please visit the Invisalign website www.invisalign.com.au (click on the "Success Stories" tab). You will also be able to see the before and after pictures of patients who have been through Invisalign treatment.

What are the primary benefits of Invisalign?

There are four primary benefits of Invisalign:

1. Invisalign is nearly invisible – you can straighten your teeth without anyone knowing.
2. Invisalign is removable – you can eat and drink what you want in treatment; you can also brush and floss normally to maintain good oral hygiene.
3. Invisalign is comfortable – there are no metal brackets or wires to cause mouth irritation: no metal or wires also means you spend less time in the doctor's chair getting adjustments.
4. Invisalign allows you to view your own virtual treatment plan before you start – so you can see how your straight teeth will look when your treatment is complete.

What are aligners made of?

Aligners are made of clear, strong medical grade non-toxic plastic that is virtually invisible when worn.

What do aligners look like?

Aligners are nearly invisible and 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."

How long will treatment take?

The length of treatment is dependent on the severity of individual cases. Treatment may vary from anywhere between six months to two years with an average treatment taking around 12 to 14 months.

Is this a new way to straighten teeth?

For years, orthodontists have used removable appliances for limited treatment. Today, with the application of computer technology and mass-customised manufacturing, Invisalign is able to treat a broader range of cases with greater precision.

How old is the company?

Align Technology, Inc., the company that manufactures Invisalign aligners, was founded in 1997. It is listed on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange in the USA (Stock Code: ALGN). Invisalign is distributed and supported in Australia by Invisalign Australia Pty Ltd, an independent distributor.

How old is this technology?

In 1945 an American orthodontist Dr. H.D. Kesling envisioned that one day, modern technology would enable the use of a series of tooth positioners to produce the kinds of movements required for comprehensive orthodontic treatment. With Invisalign, this is now possible. Using advanced computer technology, Invisalign generates a series of customised appliances, called "aligners". Each aligner is worn sequentially by the patient to produce extensive tooth movements in both upper and lower arches.

How many patients are being treated with Invisalign?

There are over 890,000 patients being treated with Invisalign and the number grows daily. Invisalign was launched in Australia in February 2002 and already over five hundred Australian orthodontists and dentists are accredited to treat patients with Invisalign.

Do orthodontists and dentists need special training in order to use Invisalign?

While Invisalign can be used with virtually any treatment philosophy, specific training is needed. All orthodontists and dentists interested in treating patients with Invisalign must attend a training course before cases will be accepted from their office.

How does Invisalign effectively move teeth?

Like brackets and arch wires, the Invisalign aligner moves teeth through the appropriate placement of controlled force on the teeth. The principal difference is that Invisalign not only controls forces, but also controls the timing of the force application. At each stage, only certain teeth are allowed to move, and these movements are determined by the orthodontic treatment plan for that particular stage. This results in an efficient force delivery system.

GETTING STARTED

How do I get started with Invisalign?

Just make an appointment with an accredited orthodontist or dentist for an initial consultation by calling 1800 468 472 (free call). Alternatively, a list of accredited orthodontists and dentists is available by visiting the Invisalign website www.invisalign.com.au

Can I go to any orthodontist or dentist to be treated with Invisalign?

Specific training is needed to treat with Invisalign before an orthodontist or dentist can begin treating patients with Invisalign. Contact 1800 468 472 to find up-to-date information on accredited orthodontists and dentists, or alternatively, refer to our list of accredited orthodontists and dentists on the Invisalign website www.invisalign.com.au.

Have Invisalign conducted clinical tests or studies?

As is typical of medical product introductions, Invisalign conducted extensive testing prior to commercially releasing the product. Various US universities have conducted clinical studies and numerous clinical articles have been published by US and Australian orthodontists.

Is Invisalign available outside Australia?

Invisalign is marketed in USA, Canada, Mexico, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Thailand and various other countries. Check the website (www.invisalign.com.au) for further details.

How can I find an Invisalign orthodontist or dentist in my area?

Call Invisalign Australia on 1800 468 472 (Australian Eastern Standard Time, Monday to Friday during normal working hours). Also, a list of accredited orthodontists and dentists is provided on the Invisalign website www.invisalign.com.au.

COST

How much does Invisalign cost?

Invisalign is a premium product compared to traditional braces. It uses state of the art technology to create a series of customised aligners for each patient and has significant patient benefits. The cost of treatment is determined by the prescribing orthodontist or dentist and is based upon the complexity of treatment required and the schedule of fees charged. Invisalign treatment is usually similar or slightly more than the cost of adult ceramic braces. Many orthodontists and dentists offer flexible and affordable monthly payment plans, often with interest free options.

Does insurance cover Invisalign?

If your insurance policy has orthodontic coverage, Invisalign should be covered to a similar extent as conventional braces as Invisalign is normally prescribed for a full course of orthodontic treatment. However, as medical benefits differ significantly from policy to policy, each patient should check with their health fund.

My insurance company has not heard of Invisalign.

Invisalign is an emerging form of technology within orthodontics in Australia. It often takes insurance companies to formally recognise new technologies in their policies. Please consult your treating orthodontist/dentist to ascertain the type of treatment you will be receiving and determine their billing policies in relation to private medical insurance. Invisalign Australia can provide assistance if necessary.

Do orthodontists/dentists offer payment plans for Invisalign treatment?

Individual treating orthodontists and dentists may offer differing payment plans that may mean that the full amount does not have to be paid up front. Please ask your treating orthodontist/dentist for their payment policy.

Will there be an initial consultation fee?

In most cases, there will be an initial consultation fee charged by the orthodontist or dentist although some practices offer a free initial consultation. This price of this consultation will vary from one practice to another.

Is there a price reduction if I only require the top/bottom aligner?

The charge for Invisalign is based upon the consultations needed and the 3D modelling cost. Single arch treatment does not mean that the price will necessarily be halved from the two arch treatment cost. Please consult your treating orthodontist/dentist for their pricing policies.

Can I receive limited treatment with Invisalign?

Invisalign can be used to provide a limited form of orthodontic treatment e.g. orthodontic relapse or minor crowding cases for a lesser fee. Check with your accredited orthodontist or dentist to see if this is suitable for you and what the charges will be.

Does Invisalign have a guarantee?

Invisalign is as effective at straightening teeth as traditional methods of orthodontics but largely depends upon a patient's biology and compliance with treatment. As such, Invisalign cannot guarantee that a patient's teeth will move exactly as predicted.

The treating orthodontist or dentist is responsible to use their experience and skill to treatment plan and monitor the appropriate treatment as it progresses. If necessary, additional treatment with Invisalign or other forms may be needed. Discuss this further with your treating orthodontist or dentist during your initial consultation.

Can I claim any rebate on Invisalign treatment?

Yes. There is a government rebate that is available to a taxpayer whose eligible net medical expenses in the year of income exceed \$1,500 (net of Medicare and any health fund refund). The amount of the rebate is 20% of the excess over \$1,500 but cannot exceed the amount of tax otherwise paid. The rebate is claimed when the patient lodges their annual income tax return.

For example, a patient undergoes Invisalign treatment at a cost of \$6500. Assuming the patient can claim \$1000 back from a private health fund and none from Medicare, the rebate would be as follows.

$$[(\$6500 - \$1000 - \$0) - \$1500] \times 20\% = \$800$$

CASE SELECTION

What can Invisalign treat?

Invisalign does not treat patients. Orthodontists and dentists do, and with experience they can use Invisalign to treat a vast majority of adults and adolescents who want a better smile. For more information on what types of cases can be treated or to see if your type of dentition is suitable for Invisalign treatment, please go to www.invisalign.com.au.

How do I know if I'm a candidate for Invisalign?

Align Technology defers to the professional judgment of the treating doctor in determining how Invisalign can be incorporated into the treatment plan. Align Technology almost never rejects the cases submitted by our doctors, as we currently accept over 98% of all cases we receive but only a orthodontist or dentist who has been Invisalign accredited can determine if Invisalign is an effective option for you.

What conditions would make me unsuitable for Invisalign?

Only the treating orthodontist/dentist is able to determine whether your particular case is suitable to be treated with Invisalign. Three types of tooth movements have found to be less predictably achieved with Invisalign alone:

- Severe derotations of cylindrical teeth
- Complex extrusions
- Closure of large spaces usually associated with extractions of teeth other than lower incisors.

With more Invisalign experience, doctors may improve the ways they manage the treatment and increase the predictability of these movements.

What is the minimum age that Invisalign can treat?

Almost all teenagers over the age of 14 are eligible for treatment with Invisalign as long as their second (twelve year old) molars are fully erupted.

I am currently wearing braces - can I make the switch to the Invisalign?

Many patients are being treated with some form of combination of braces and Invisalign. You should consult your orthodontist or dentist to determine the best treatment for you.

Does the procedure work on overbites (overjets) and how?

Yes, Invisalign can correct mild to moderate overbites. The aligners create a force on the front teeth causing them to intrude, thus correcting the overbite.

Are there certain dental conditions that automatically exclude you from being an eligible patient?

Yes, certain dental conditions can restrict you from being an eligible patient – for further information, please consult your orthodontist or dentist. Cases that are difficult or unsuitable for Invisalign may include up-righting severely tipped teeth, cases where not all the permanent teeth have erupted, cases with multiple missing teeth, patients with poor periodontal condition or patients that want to change their facial profile.

Are crowns a factor in Invisalign treatment?

No, crowns are usually not a factor in Invisalign treatment. However, small composites called attachments are sometimes bonded onto teeth to help achieve certain movements. In these cases, the location of crowns must be carefully evaluated by an Invisalign orthodontist or dentist.

Will TMJ affect Invisalign treatment?

TMJ refers to the temporomandibular, or jaw joint. Individuals can have a number of problems with the jaw joint, some of which can be aggravated by appliances and treatments like Invisalign. To find out if your TMJ problem will adversely impact orthodontic treatment, consult an Invisalign accredited orthodontist or dentist.

Can Invisalign close gaps (space closure)?

Yes. Spaces between teeth are generally easy to close with Invisalign. However, the size and location of the spaces will need to be evaluated.

Are bridges a factor in Invisalign treatment?

Because bridges firmly link two or more teeth together, they can offer significant resistance to tooth movement. Your orthodontist or dentist will be able to determine whether bridges will be a factor in your treatment.

WHILE IN TREATMENT

How long will it take to begin treatment after the initial consultation?

After or during the initial consultation, your treating orthodontist/dentist will need to take x-rays, photos and moulds of your teeth. These records will be sent to the US to be used to manufacture your custom made aligners. This process will take approximately 6 weeks (from the time the records are sent to the US to the time treatment can begin).

How often must I see the orthodontist/dentist?

Your orthodontist or dentist will schedule regular appointments – usually about once every six weeks. This is the only way your orthodontist or dentist can be sure that the treatment is progressing as planned.

Will the treatment be painful?

Most people experience temporary, minor 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 is a sign that the Invisalign aligners are working — sequentially moving your teeth to their final destination. This discomfort typically goes away a couple of days after you insert the new aligner in the series.

Will wearing the Invisalign aligners affect my speech?

Like all orthodontic treatments, 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 or minor speech impediment caused by the aligners should disappear.

Are there restrictions on what I can eat while in treatment?

No. Unlike traditional orthodontics, you can usually eat whatever you desire while in treatment because you remove your aligners to eat and drink. Thus, there is no need to restrict your consumption of any of your favourite foods and snacks, unless instructed otherwise by your orthodontist or dentist. Also, it is important that you brush your teeth after each meal and prior to re-inserting your aligners to maintain proper hygiene.

Can I drink with aligners still on?

You should remove your aligners to drink anything else except water. Leaving aligners on while drinking may stain them and the patient risks decay drinking fluids with sugar in them.

Will smoking stain the aligners?

We discourage smoking while wearing aligners because it is possible for the aligners to become discoloured.

Can I chew gum while wearing aligners?

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

What's the best way to clean my aligners?

The best way to clean your aligners is by brushing and rinsing them in lukewarm water. Your treating doctor can also supply you with aligner cleaning crystals.

How often must I wear my aligners?

Aligners should be worn all day, except when eating, brushing and flossing.

Can patients use aligners for bleaching teeth while active tooth movement is occurring?

While we are aware that some patients are using aligners for bleaching, Align Technology, Inc. has not examined the compatibility of currently available bleaching products with our aligners, nor have we demonstrated efficacy in clinical studies. Align recommends that you consult your orthodontist or dentist for more information on whitening teeth.

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

This 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 Invisalign aligners. Discuss these possibilities with your treating orthodontist or dentist. Every patient is different and outcomes vary.

What happens if the aligners no longer fit?

In this case you should contact your orthodontist or dentist immediately who will diagnose what remedial action is needed to bring the treatment back on course. This may involve moving back one or two stages in treatment to a previous aligner or possibly some additional orthodontic treatment.