

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CLEAR ALIGNERS

Clear aligners are a series of customized, clear plastic orthodontic appliances for individuals who want to correct issues with their bite or teeth spacing. Each aligner is designed to move teeth in small increments to improve alignment or adjust your bite. Not only are clear aligners transparent, but they also are removable, so they don't trap plaque and debris like wire braces. Clear aligners are usually created by technicians in a production facility using computer-aided design and manufacturing, then fitted and monitored by an orthodontist or general dentist.



Who is eligible for clear aligners?

Clear aligners work best for adults and teenagers experiencing mild spacing and bite issues. Previous dental work, such as veneers, crowns and bridgework, may affect your eligibility. Consult an orthodontist or general dentist to determine if you are a candidate for clear aligners.

How do clear aligners work?

An orthodontist or a qualified general dentist will take an impression or intraoral scan of your teeth in order to determine your treatment plan, which includes the length of treatment and how many aligners you will need. Complex cases can require 12-18 months of treatment, while relatively simple cases may only require 14 weeks. As you progress through the treatment plan, your teeth will move gradually according to the shape of the retainer. Each aligner is worn for about two weeks and removed only for eating, brushing and flossing. Your treatment time may be extended if you lose or break an aligner or miss an appointment with your orthodontist or general dentist. In order to prevent your teeth from shifting back to their initial position at the conclusion of the treatment plan, your oral health care provider will likely recommend either a bonded (permanent) wire retainer or regular nightly wear of a clear plastic removable retainer.

Aligners are usually worn for at least 20 hours a day and removed when you eat, drink, floss or brush your teeth.

Can I expect risks or discomfort with this treatment?

Most patients will adjust to wearing clear aligners with only minimal discomfort. You may experience tenderness around your teeth and gums when adjusting to each new aligner. Some people may notice differences in their chewing, salivation or speech, but these symptoms are usually temporary.

How do I care for my clear aligners?

Aligners are usually worn for at least 20 hours a day and removed when you eat, drink, floss or brush your teeth. Avoid smoking during treatment, as this may stain the aligners. Your dentist will provide you with more detailed instructions about how long to wear your clear aligners and how and when to clean and sterilize your aligners. If you encounter any problems with your clear aligners' fit, or they become damaged or lost, contact your orthodontist or general dentist for a replacement aligner.