



FOR PATIENTS UNDERGOING CLEAR ALIGNER THERAPY

The effectiveness of your orthodontic treatment depends on your cooperation with your doctor. An informed and cooperative patient who carefully follows his or her doctor's prescribed orthodontic treatment plan will have the best chance to achieve positive results.

Your doctor has recommended that you use a clear aligner orthodontic treatment system. Although you may already understand the obvious potential benefits of using clear aligner treatment, i.e., a beautiful, healthy smile, it is important that you consider that, as is the case with all medical treatments and procedures, orthodontic treatment has limitations, risks, and inconveniences, and, occasionally, such risks may warrant foregoing treatment altogether. Prior to treatment, speak with your doctor about the potential risks of using a clear aligner orthodontic treatment system and available orthodontic alternatives, including the option of having no treatment at all.

Please read this information carefully. Be sure to ask your doctor about anything that you do not completely understand, and make sure that you know exactly what is required of you as the patient (or as the parent/guardian of a patient) during treatment.

About Clear Aligner Treatment

Clear aligner orthodontic treatment consists of a series of clear plastic, removable appliances worn by the patient. The liners are designed to move your teeth in small increments to improve bite function and/or aesthetic appearance.

Clear aligner orthodontic treatment combines your doctor's diagnosis and prescription with specialized technology to formulate a treatment plan that specifies the desired movements of your teeth. Once your doctor has developed your treatment plan, a series of customized aligners will be fabricated specifically for you.

Procedure

Your doctor may first conduct a regular exam and take x-rays and photographs of your teeth. Impressions/Scans of your teeth will be taken by your doctor and sent with a prescription to the laboratory of your clear aligner treatment system's manufacturer (the "Manufacturer"), where technicians will develop your treatment plan in accordance with your doctor's prescription. Based on the treatment plan, a series of custom-made aligners, designed specifically for you, will be created and sent to your doctor. The total number of aligners will vary depending on the complexity of your malocclusion (misaligned bite) and treatment plan prescribed by your doctor.

Your doctor will provide you with the aligners in accordance with the treatment plan and give you specific instructions for their use. Unless your doctor instructs otherwise, you **MUST** wear your aligners at least 22 hours per day, removing them only to eat, brush, and floss.

Your doctor will inform you when it is time to switch aligners. Generally speaking, you will wear a given set of aligners for about one to two weeks before switching to the next set in the series. The duration of your treatment plan depends on the complexity of your doctor's prescription.

Unless your doctor instructs otherwise, you should follow up with your doctor at least every four to six weeks. **Missing and cancelling appointments will negatively impact your treatment and may result in unwanted teeth shifting. If you miss a scheduled appointment, your doctor will have no responsibility for unwanted teeth shifting and/or incomplete treatment.**

Unwanted teeth shifting and/or incomplete treatment is a risk you assume if you miss a scheduled appointment.

Benefits of Clear Aligner Treatment

The clear aligner treatment system is intended to provide the end benefits of traditional "wired" orthodontic treatment, such as straight teeth and improved bite function, as well as the following benefits that are only available when going wireless:

- Clear aligners offer an esthetic alternative to conventional braces.
- The aligners are practically invisible.
- Aligners are removable, allowing you to eat, drink, brush, and floss without difficulty.
- There are no cuts or abrasions from metal wires or brackets, so clear aligners are generally more comfortable than traditional braces. In addition, the wearing of clear aligners may improve oral hygiene habits during treatment, and you may notice improved overall gum health.



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Possible Risks and Inconveniences

As with other orthodontic treatments, clear aligner treatment product(s) may carry some of the following risks and inconveniences:

- Treatment time may exceed your doctor's estimates. Poor compliance with your doctor's instructions, not wearing aligners the required number of hours per day, missed appointments, excessive bone growth, poor oral hygiene, and broken appliances can lengthen treatment time, increase your costs, and affect the quality of your results.
- Dental tenderness may be experienced after switching aligners.
- Sores and irritation of the soft tissue of the mouth (i.e., gums, cheeks, tongue, and lips) are possible but rarely occur due to wearing aligners.
- Teeth may shift position after treatment. Following your doctor's post-treatment retention plan, which will include consistent wearing of retainers at the end of treatment, should reduce this tendency.
- The aligners may temporarily affect speech, although any speech impediment caused by the clear aligner treatment products should disappear within one or two weeks.
- You may experience a temporary increase in salivation or mouth dryness and certain medications can heighten this effect.
- Attachments may be bonded to one or more teeth during the course of treatment to facilitate tooth movement and/or appliance retention (these will be removed after treatment is completed).
- Tooth decay, periodontal disease, inflammation of the gums, or permanent markings may occur if patients consume food or beverages containing sugar, do not brush and floss their teeth properly before wearing the clear aligner treatment products, or do not use proper oral hygiene and preventative maintenance.
- Teeth may require interproximal recontouring or slenderizing in order to create space needed for dental alignment to occur.
- Your bite may change throughout treatment, which may cause you to experience temporary discomfort.
- You may require additional impressions and/or refinement aligners after the initial series of aligners.
- Teeth which have been overlapped for long periods of time may be missing the gingival tissue below the interproximal contact once the teeth are aligned, leading to the appearance of a "black triangle" space.
- General medical conditions and use of medications can affect orthodontic treatment.
- Allergic reactions may occur.
- Additional orthodontic treatment, including the use of bonded buttons, orthodontic elastics, auxiliary appliances (e.g., temporary anchorage devices or sectional fixed appliances), and/or restorative dental procedures may be needed for some cases where aligners alone may not be adequate to achieve the desired outcome (there may be an additional cost to you if you require such procedures).
- Aligners are not effective in the movement of dental implants.
- At the end of orthodontic treatment, the bite may require adjustment ("occlusal adjustment").
- General medical conditions and use of medications can affect orthodontic treatment.
- Allergic reactions may occur.
- The health of the bone and gums which support the teeth may be impaired or aggravated.
- Oral surgery may be necessary to correct crowding or severe jaw imbalances that are present prior to wearing the clear aligner product(s) (if oral surgery is required, risks associated with anaesthesia and proper healing must be taken into account prior to treatment).
- Previously traumatised or significantly restored teeth may be aggravated. In rare instances, the useful life of the tooth may be reduced, the tooth may require additional dental treatment such as endodontic and/or additional restorative work, and/or the tooth may be lost.
- Existing dental restorations, such as crowns and bridges, may become dislodged and require re-cementation or, in some instances replacement.
- Short clinical crowns can pose appliance retention issues and inhibit tooth movement.
- Root resorption (shortening) can occur during treatment. Shortened roots are not a problem under healthy conditions. In rare cases, however, root resorption can result in loss of teeth (there is no way to foresee if this will occur during your treatment and nothing can be done to prevent it).
- In cases of multiple missing teeth, it is more likely that the aligner may break (if this happens, contact your doctor immediately to replace it).
- Because orthodontic appliances are worn in the mouth, accidentally swallowing or aspirating the aligner may occur.
- In rare instances, problems may occur in the jaw joint, causing joint pain, discomfort, headaches, or ear problems (if you experience any of these symptoms, contact your doctor immediately).
- Teeth that are not at least partially covered by the aligner may undergo supra-eruption (i.e., come out of the gums more than other teeth).





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Patient Commitment

Your commitment is critical to achieving the best possible results with the clear aligner treatment system.

It is absolutely crucial that you wear your aligners at least 22 hours per day, every day, except when eating, brushing, and flossing. Failure to do so will negatively impact treatment and prevent you from achieving the desired results.

Smile Retention

Due to the tendency of teeth to shift in the human dentition, you can expect that your teeth will naturally begin to shift back to their original position once your prescribed course of aligners is complete. **For this reason, you MUST wear the retainer(s) provided by your doctor for life. This is the most critical part of your treatment and is essential to maintaining your results.** Upon completion of your clear aligner treatment, lingual bars may be installed. These are rigid metal reinforcements placed behind your teeth to prevent them from moving.

In addition, all patients will need to wear retainers indefinitely. Retainers are to be worn full time over your lingual bar, at least 22 hours a day, for the first two weeks of use. After a few months of gradually wearing the retainers less frequently throughout the day, you may, with permission from your doctor, begin wearing your retainers at night only.

Retainers should be cleaned with a toothbrush and water every time you brush your teeth, and should be replaced every nine to 12 months due to cleanliness and firmness issues. You must clean around your lingual bar carefully and diligently every night to prevent plaque and gum disease.

If either your lingual bar or retainer is lost or broken it should be replaced immediately. If your lingual bar breaks, you MUST immediately begin wearing your last set of aligners until it is replaced to prevent your teeth from shifting.

Fees

Payment of your bills is considered part of your treatment, and all charges incurred are your responsibility. Please note that our relationship is with you, the patient, not your insurance company. Depending on your insurance company, we may, as a courtesy, bill your insurer directly; however, you are responsible for any co-payment and the portion that your insurance does not cover.

Please keep in mind that insurance is strictly an estimate not a guarantee of payment. Our practice is committed to providing the best treatment for our patients and we charge what is usual and customary. Understand that clear aligner treatment involves significantly more steps and higher laboratory fees than traditional braces, and you are responsible for payment regardless of any insurance company's arbitrary determination of usual and customary rates based on traditional braces. Our office will cooperate fully with the regulations and requests of those specific insurance companies for which we are providers. However, we will not enter into a dispute with your insurance company over any claim.

If your treatment time is extended and/or the treatment plan changes beyond the estimated time due to your choice, or **specifically because of missed appointments, and/or failure to comply with your doctor's instructions, there may be additional fees until completion of your treatment.**

Informed Consent and Agreement

Any patient who cancels or breaks a scheduled appointment on less than 24 hours notice may incur a cancellation fee.

If you do not comply with your doctor's instructions and, as a result, your aligners do not conform to your teeth, there may be an additional charge to get more aligners fabricated for correction. Old aligners will be discarded after one year from your last appointment if you fail to continue your treatment and new impressions will be required to restart.

If supplemental orthodontic treatment or additional cosmetic procedures (e.g., crowns or veneers) are necessary to complete treatment, there may be an additional cost to you if you require such procedures.

If for any reason you fail to pay while in treatment, and, after receiving adequate notice of your failure to pay, your account remains in arrears, treatment may be discontinued until your balance is paid, at which time treatment will resume. Unless otherwise agreed, acceptance of late payment, partial payment, or non-payment shall not constitute a waiver of our entitlement to have all bills paid in full and on time; nor shall such acceptance constitute a waiver of any legal rights and remedies available to us.