

## Frequently Asked Questions - Invisalign

What if I was told by my dentist that Invisalign® was not for me?

Our office was one of the first in the country to use the Invisalign system. We have one of the largest groups of patients being treated with the system. Because of our experience, we are also able to treat more complex types of problems than most other orthodontic offices. This experience allows us to know how to react when the teeth are not responding as expected and to "push the envelope" to treat cases with Invisalign that many otherwise expert orthodontist would require regular "braces." As a matter of fact, some of our most satisfying cases were patients who had been previously told that they were not candidates for Invisalign treatment.

How much does Invisalign® cost?

As with other types of orthodontic treatment, the cost of Invisalign® is heavily dependent on the complexity of a patient's case. However, the cost is generally less expensive than traditional braces. For more information about specific cost information, call us at the location of your choice.

Does insurance cover Invisalign®?

Because medical benefits differ significantly from policy to policy, each patient should review their coverage. However, if a patient has orthodontic coverage, Invisalign® should be covered to the same extent as conventional braces.

## How does Invisalign® effectively move teeth?

Like brackets and archwires, Invisalign® Aligners move 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.

## 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 dental treatment, consult your Invisalign®-certified doctor.

## Invisalign vs Braces

Many pages could be written on the differences between braces and Invisalign. Patients initially intrigued by Invisalign, having resisted conventional appliances for so long, often ask if braces would be more effective. There is no simple answer to this, and any orthodontist who gives a stock answer is unfamiliar with Invisalign.

First, understand that both braces and the Invisalign aligners are tools that permit similar alignment of teeth. With braces, the force required to move a tooth is delivered via tension provided by elastics or metal wires, to a point of force located in the center of each brace. Aligners provide force as each subsequent tray is fabricated with the tooth positions slightly straighter than the prior aligner, the force being placed over the entire surface of each tooth.

It is a bit simplistic to say that braces work better in more severe cases. However, as a general rule, cases of crowding sufficient enough to warrant tooth removal indeed are treated more effectively with braces. This is because removal of teeth involves the shifting of certain teeth over relatively long distances, where as cases treated without tooth removal (the vast majority of all cases) involve more tipping or rotating teeth along their own axes. Recently, Invisalign has included extraction cases into their criteria of treatable conditions, but in many instances the goal is to use Invisalign for only a portion of the treatment, lessening the time braces ultimately need to be worn.

The majority of cases can be treated with either braces or Invisalign. Invisalign has the obvious benefit of being essentially invisible when worn, and easily removable for eating, tooth brushing, and occasional special events. The flipside of this advantage of removability is that great discipline is required to avoid going too long without wearing the aligners; they only work when in the mouth. Each aligner is worn for two weeks, and pressure is felt only for the first few days, yet full-time cooperation is required every day for treatment to progress in the most effective manner. Some patients who are in the midst of treatment have hit rough patches where due to travel, illness, pregnancy, or laziness, they cannot wear the aligners on a full time basis. All is not lost, however, as these patients can wear aligners only at night to capture the progress gained, and then resume full-time wear at some point in the future. Cases only half way completed with Invisalign look 50% better! Similarly, some patients who have had a bad week of wearing the aligners full-time simply wear the aligners for more than two weeks prior to switching to the next aligner. While most Invisalign patients accept the added responsibility of monitoring their own compliance carefully, most remain happy to have avoided braces. However, there have been some Invisalign patients who seem to tire of the daily grind of aligner wear and removal, petering out as the months go by. Without ideal cooperation in wearing aligners 20-22 hours each day, ideal results cannot be achieved.

Though braces cannot be removed, all patients, after a more unrelenting adjustment period, become completely used to the braces, and usually forget about them. Clear

braces, which are bonded to the teeth, look surprisingly good compared to the braces you might have imagined from childhood. Many patients decide to switch to braces at the end of Invisalign treatment, for a very short time, to achieve the most perfect detailing, and often they comment that braces were not that bad at all!!

In terms of the final outcome, final detailing with Invisalign can be time consuming and not as precise as with conventional braces. Orthodontists are by nature perfectionists, and getting that tooth just right is easier with braces.

What's very surprising is that most Invisalign cases range in duration from 10-15 months, which is less time than most adolescents wear conventional braces. Also, Invisalign is actually the appliance of choice in our office for certain types of malocclusions, including cases with spacing between the front teeth, as well as narrow upper arches.

Dr. Prince is a Certified Invisalign® Premier Provider Elite

## Non-Orthodontist Providing Invisalign Treatment

An orthodontist is a trained specialist in straightening teeth. "Ortho" is a prefix which means Straight. Conventional braces are still the more common modality for moving teeth, but Invisalign is becoming an increasingly popular technique.

Invisalign is now available for general dentists, and many dentists are rushing to become certified in this technique. A large percentage of these dentists have never performed any orthodontic treatment, and therefore are simply not as experienced as orthodontists in tooth movement. However, minor cases can certainly be treated to a successful outcome under a general dentist's care. In fact, I have been asked by Invisalign to train both general dentists and orthodontists for certification with the product.

One factor in deciding whether to use a general dentist as your Invisalign provider should be how complex your case is. Another is cost. In my opinion, general dentists should charge less for the average case than an orthodontist, but oddly, many dentists actually charge more!

If you have a great relationship with your current general dentist, and he or she is confident in a successful outcome, and the price seems fair, then go for it! However, if you are researching for an Invisalign provider, I cannot help but suggest that you seek the care of an orthodontist with Invisalign expertise.

## Why would you need to file my teeth?

Most orthodontic cases involve crowded teeth, which means that the width of all the teeth within the dental arch exceeds the arch circumference. It was common forty years ago to have permanent teeth removed to gain the necessary space, even when the degree of