

Welcome to Invisalign – Patient Guide & Dictionary

Congratulations on taking this step to achieve a healthy and confident smile.

Important Note: Pets love Invisalign trays. Please keep them out of reach when you are eating. Also, take extra care to check napkins and tables before leaving restaurants or family/friends' homes.

Invisalign Dictionary

We've put together this Invisalign Dictionary to help you easily understand some of the words and tools you'll hear along the way.

Aligners

Clear, custom-made trays that fit snugly over your teeth and gently guide them into their proper position over time. You'll typically switch to a new set every 1–2 weeks.

Attachments

Small, tooth-colored “bumps” made of dental resin that are temporarily bonded to certain teeth. They help the aligners grip the teeth better and apply the right amount of pressure to move them effectively. You may have attachments removed or bonded on different teeth based on the custom treatment plan developed for your case. Attachments are fully removed when treatment is complete.

Button

A small, metal hook attached to a tooth (similar to an attachment) used to hold elastic bands if needed.

iTero Scanner

A digital scanning device that creates a 3D image of your teeth and bite without the need for messy traditional impressions. The scan is quick, comfortable, and allows us to instantly plan your custom Invisalign treatment.

IPR (Interproximal Reduction)

A technique where tiny amounts of enamel are carefully polished away between teeth to create a little extra space. This is sometimes needed to help teeth shift properly and align better. It's quick, gentle, and safe.

Refinements

Extra sets of aligners made toward the end of your treatment if fine-tuning is needed to get your smile just right. These are very common and part of making sure you get the best possible results.

Retainers

Clear trays worn after your Invisalign treatment is complete to keep your teeth in their new, straight position. Think of them as “insurance” for your new smile.

What to Expect & Pain Management

During the first 24 hours with Invisalign, it is normal for you to feel mild discomfort, tightness in your teeth. Here is a list of possible initial side-effects, but don't worry as they will subside with time.

- It's normal to feel tightness, pressure, or mild soreness in your teeth and jaw.
You may notice temporary dry mouth, a slight lisp, or increased saliva — this resolves quickly.
- You may prefer soft foods like smoothies, scrambled eggs, or yogurt while adjusting.
- Drink lots of cool water to stay hydrated and soothe your mouth.
Take acetaminophen as needed for discomfort.

Contact us if you experience:

Sharp pain, swollen gums, or aligners cutting into your mouth — we can trim or adjust them.

Oral Hygiene

- Remove your aligners before brushing and flossing. Rinse them before putting them back in
- Brush 2x daily for 2 minutes with a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste to remove plaque and bacteria from around teeth and gums
- Floss 1x daily to remove plaque and bacteria from around your teeth and gums
- Waterpik if recommended
- Use mouthwash as needed and/or prescribed mouthwash as directed

Wearing Aligners

It's essential to wear your Invisalign trays at all times and remove them only for eating, brushing and flossing. Optimal tooth movement with Invisalign requires you wear your aligners for a minimum of 22 hrs/per day.

Inserting Aligners

1. Wash your hands with soap and water
 - Wash your hands.
 - Insert the upper tray over front teeth, then press toward the molars.
 - Do the same with the lower tray.
Use gentle fingertip pressure — don't bite them into place.
 - Once inserted, use your chewy (provided by the office) to fully seat trays.

Removing Aligners

- Start from the back molars on one side and gently "peel" forward toward the front.
- Use clean fingers or a removal tool.
Never force the tray — slow and steady works best.

Changing Aligners

- Follow the schedule provided (usually weekly or biweekly)
- Switch trays after your last meal of the day, before bed, for the longest wear time
- Expect mild soreness for up to 48 hours after switching trays
- Tylenol may help

Invisalign Storage Case

Be sure to use your Invisalign Storage Case. The traveling case is to be used when you take your trays out. Many patients will put them in napkins or pockets and then before they know it– the trays are thrown away or run through the laundry!

Reading Invisalign Markings

To help avoid confusion, each aligner is engraved with your unique case number, a “U” for upper and an “L” for lower, followed by the stage number.

You may insert either the upper or lower aligner first. When inserting each aligner, gently push the aligners over your front teeth. Then apply equal pressure, using your fingertips, to the tops of your left and right molars (back teeth) until the aligner snaps into place.

Daily Care and Maintenance

- Use a clear, non or lightly-scented hand soap (do not use dish soap) and a soft manual toothbrush to clean your Invisalign trays. You may also use Invisalign cleaning crystals as directed. The welcome box contains a packet or more may be purchased online. Do not use toothpaste as it can scratch the trays.
- Aligner cases may also be hand washed with hand soap (do not use dish soap) and water. Do not use a dishwasher to clean your case or your aligners.
- Keep aligners away from HOT water and harsh chemicals. Do NOT use denture cleaners to clean aligners, and do not soak them in mouthwash. These products can damage the surface of the aligners, causing them to become dull and more visible.
- Always rinse your trays with lukewarm water when you take them out as this will help prevent them from turning yellow. Note that hot water can cause deformation.
- Tobacco use, smoking or vaping while wearing aligners will lead to discoloration or damage.

Frequently Asked Questions

What Happens If I Lose My Trays(s)?

Always keep the most recently used aligners. If your current aligner is lost or broken, we may recommend that you temporarily go back one stage while a replacement is being made.

What if I run out of aligners or need to delay an appointment?

Life happens! Wear your last tray to maintain results. Contact us for guidance.

How Do I Drink and Eat with Aligners?

Always remove aligners when eating and drinking.. Only drink plain, cool water while wearing aligners. Remove them for all other beverages, especially those that are hot, sugary, or acidic. Regardless of your choice, when you're done, simply remove the trays, give them a quick rinse under water, and place them back. This practice prevents sugar and other undesirable residues from accumulating beneath the trays and lingering on your teeth, which could lead to cavities. Use Hydrogen peroxide as indicated below to keep your trays stain free.

How Do I Prevent Trays from Yellowing?

We recommend soaking your aligners in hydrogen peroxide in a closed container and shaking them to loosen any debris. After soaking for 30 minutes, brush the aligners to remove any stubborn plaque. Always remember to rinse your aligners before putting them back in your mouth.

What if an attachment falls off?

Losing one or two attachments typically does not require an additional visit. If you lose more than this, please let us know so we can re-bond the attachment(s).

What If I am supposed to be done with my Invisalign Treatment but want changes made?

We will continue to make refinements and order trays until both you and Dr. White are satisfied with the results up to **3 additional refinements**.

How do I keep my teeth straight after Invisalign treatment?

Once you and Dr. White are satisfied with the results, Invisalign will send us several sets of Vivera retainers. You will receive additional instructions, but you will wear them for 3 months following treatment as with aligners before stepping down to night-only wear. You will need to always wear these retainers to maintain the results from Invisalign.