

WEARING, USING, AND CARING FOR YOUR INVISALIGN® ALIGNERS

Here are some tips to help ensure proper use and avoid damaging your aligners. Always remember to:

1. Wear your aligners per your doctor's instructions, usually 20-22 hours per day.
2. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling your aligners.
3. Handle only ONE aligner at a time.

Aligner Insertion

1. Make sure you have the proper aligner—the upper for your top teeth and the lower for your bottom teeth.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Do NOT bite your aligners into position. This may damage them. Note: If you experience sharp pain or significant discomfort, discontinue use of the aligners and contact your doctor.

Aligner Removal

1. On one side of your mouth, use your fingertip on the inside of your back molar to slowly pull the aligner from your molars.
2. Repeat this process on the other side of your mouth before trying to completely remove the aligner.
3. Once aligner is disengaged from the molars on both sides of your mouth, you should be able to slowly work your way forward gently prying the aligner away from your teeth with your fingertips.

Note:

1. Immediately rinse aligner with water, shake off excess water, and store your aligners in the protective case provided with your starter kit.
2. To help prevent damage to the aligners, avoid unnecessary removal.
3. Take care in removing your aligners, especially if multiple attachments are being used.
4. Do not use excessive force to bend or twist an aligner to get it off.
5. DO NOT use any sharp object to remove your aligners.
6. Consult with your doctor if your aligners are extremely difficult to remove.

Proper upkeep and good oral hygiene are essential for keeping your Invisalign aligners clean, invisible, and odor-free. Although Invisalign allows for aligners to be removed for eating and drinking, failing to clean your trays properly afterwards can result in discoloration and a buildup of bacteria.

DO:

1. Rinse your aligners when you remove them. Dry saliva and plaque create a perfect breeding ground for foul smelling bacteria.
2. Soak your aligners. Denture cleaner, Steraligner, and the official Invisalign cleaning crystals are all excellent options for keeping your trays clear and sanitized. A clear anti-bacterial soap is an excellent and inexpensive way to keep your aligners clear, fresh, and free from harmful bacteria.
3. Brush and floss your teeth before re-inserting your aligners. Proper oral hygiene is key to maintaining healthy teeth and avoiding cavities and decay. Since Invisalign is form fitted, failing to brush and floss properly can trap harmful particles between your teeth and aligner, which increases your risk for dental issues in the future.

4. Brush your aligners gently only if there are particles building up. Vigorous brushing can scratch your aligners and leave visible etchings. Brush carefully!

DON'T:

1. Do not eat or drink (anything but water) while wearing Invisalign. Many foods and drinks can stain or discolor your aligners and cause them to stink.
2. Do not use toothpaste to clean your aligners. Many types of toothpaste (especially those with whitening agents) are abrasive and can dull your aligners or create small traps for bacteria to dwell.
3. Do not use colored soaps. Although anti-bacterial soap is a great way to clean your Invisalign braces, using anything but clear soap can cause your aligners to take on alternative hues and shades.
4. Do not leave your aligners exposed or unprotected while eating. Aside from an increased risk of misplacing them, leaving your aligners in the open exposes them to harmful germs and bacteria. Rinse them, soak them, and then rinse them again before returning them to your mouth.

What is considered an emergency?

Loss of an attachment: If you have an attachment that comes off, typically you can wait until you next visit to have it put back on.

Loss of a button: If you lose a button that your elastics attaches to, please call our office. We will determine when you need to come in.

Loss of a tray: call our office as soon as possible.

If you are unsure if you have an urgent issue, please call our office at 970-328-1075.

Traveling Tips with Invisalign

What if an aligner breaks, is left behind at a restaurant while eating, or you lost your purse or luggage with your aligners inside? Here are some tips for Invisalign patients on what to do if you are out of town and something happens to your aligners!

Depending upon the length of your trip, at minimum, always take your previous set of aligners, your current set, and your next set of aligners with you. Depending on how long you have been wearing the current set will determine whether you will go back to a previous set or move forward to the next one. General rule of thumb ... if the current aligners are tight, go back. If you can remove them easily and in the second week, move forward to the next set. However, if possible, let your orthodontist decide and call him or her immediately.

If you are going to be out of town for more than two weeks, we can order replacement aligners, if needed, and ship them to you direct. Continue wearing your previous set until the new ones arrive and start again with the new set.

Be prepared. Always carry your aligners in your purse or carry-on luggage when flying. Baggage can be delayed or lost.

An extra case is always a good idea. If you leave one behind in a hotel or restaurant, you have a spare. It isn't always convenient to brush your teeth after eating during travel. Make sure you at least rinse out your mouth and aligners before re-inserting into your mouth. You can brush your teeth when you get back to your room. This isn't ideal, but acceptable in a pinch.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Will the treatment be painful?

A: Most people experience tooth soreness for a few days after starting each new stage. This is normal. It is a sign that the Invisalign aligners are working, moving your teeth to their final destination. This soreness should gradually go away a couple of days after inserting the new aligner in the series. If it doesn't, promptly call your doctor.

Q: Will wearing the Invisalign aligners affect my speech?

A: Like all orthodontic treatments, the aligners may temporarily affect your speech, 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 your aligners should disappear.

Q: What should I do if my new Invisalign aligner doesn't snap onto my teeth?

A: Minor discrepancies between the new aligner and the current tooth position are normal, since the teeth need time to conform to the new aligner position. In the event of significant problems with aligner fit, inform your doctor.

Q: Are there restrictions on what I can eat?

A: In general, no. Unlike traditional orthodontics, you can usually eat and drink whatever you desire because you remove your aligners while eating. Thus, there is no need to restrict your consumption of any of your favorite foods and snacks, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

Q: Is it OK to drink hot or cold beverages while wearing Invisalign aligners?

A: Except for cool water, we recommend that you do not drink while wearing the aligners. This is to avoid formation of cavities and stains, or warping of the aligners with hot drinks and hot water.

Q: Can I chew gum while wearing Invisalign aligners?

A: NO. Gum will stick to the aligners. We recommend removing your aligners for all snacks and meals.

Q: Will smoking or chewing tobacco stain the aligners?

A: We discourage tobacco use while wearing aligners because of the possibility of aligner discoloration.

Q: Why do some of my aligners have bumps or ridges on them?

A: Depending on your specific treatment, some of the movements may require either "attachments" or "ridges" to help the aligner grip the teeth. These bumps, or wells, are where the aligner grips the attachment the doctor places on your teeth. The attachments are actually small pieces of composite the doctor affixes to your teeth that are then gripped by bumps on your aligners. The ridges are slim indentations in your aligners. Your doctor will use one or both of these features to attempt to achieve the desired movement.

Q: What if I lose or break an Invisalign aligner?

A: In the event that an aligner is lost or broken, you should immediately inform your doctor. Your doctor will probably tell you to start wearing your last set or next set of aligners immediately. He or she will possibly order you a new set of aligners to replace the ones you just lost, which should arrive in a few days.