How to Straighten Teeth Without Braces | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/straighten-teeth-without-braces/

Details:

For many adults and teenagers, clear aligners such as Invisalign are a popular way to straighten teeth without traditional metal braces. Invisalign uses a series of clear, removable, custom-made aligners that move teeth gently and gradually, while remaining nearly invisible. Aligners are usually worn for about 20 to 22 hours a day and changed every 7 to 14 days. Whether clear aligners suit you depends on an examination and treatment plan from your dentist or orthodontist. At Core Dental our team can assess your teeth and explain your options.

What is the usual way to straighten teeth without traditional braces?

Clear aligner treatment, such as Invisalign, is a widely used option for straightening teeth without traditional braces. It uses a series of clear, removable aligners to move your teeth gradually while remaining nearly invisible. Other approaches exist, and the right one depends on your teeth, your bite and your goals, so we recommend a consultation to look at the alternatives, including orthodontic braces and internal lingual braces . Our overview of teeth straightening options explains more.

What are clear aligners made of and how do they fit?

Invisalign aligners are made of a transparent plastic material. Each aligner is a custom-fitted tray, made for your own teeth, and is nearly invisible to other people. Because the trays are made to a digital plan, each set is designed to move your teeth a small amount towards the planned position.

Can Invisalign aligners be removed?

Yes. Invisalign aligners have a removable design, so you can take them out to brush your teeth, to eat and drink, or for an important work event or social occasion if needed. Removing them for long periods can slow your progress, so it is important to wear them for the recommended time. We discuss this with you at the start of treatment so you know what to expect. You can read more in our article on whether you can eat and drink normally with Invisalign .

How many hours a day should Invisalign aligners be worn?

For treatment to progress as planned, Invisalign aligners generally need to be worn for around 20 to 22 hours a day. Your dentist will confirm the wear time that applies to you. Many people find it helpful to keep the aligner case with them and to put the aligners back in after meals and brushing.

How often are Invisalign aligners changed?

Aligners are typically changed every 7 to 14 days, depending on the complexity of the case, with each set generally worn for up to two weeks before you move to the next set. Your change-over frequency

depends on how complicated your case is and how your teeth are responding to the treatment. Your dentist or orthodontist will advise you.

Can everyone have Invisalign?

Many alignment concerns can be treated with clear aligners, and the technology has developed over the years, but not every case is suitable. Your dentist or orthodontist will advise whether Invisalign is right for you after a smile assessment, and will explain if another approach would suit you better. Suitability, treatment time and results vary for each individual. See our page on types of Invisalign .

What happens when you start Invisalign treatment?

On the day you start treatment, your clinician will show you how to put your aligners in and how to take them out. You will also be given instructions on how to clean and care for them. This is a good time to ask any questions about wear time, eating and drinking, and what to do if an aligner is lost or damaged.

Does Invisalign hurt?

One of the benefits of straightening teeth without traditional braces is that there are no metal brackets or wires to rub against your cheeks. Aligners may feel a little tight for a day or so at the start of treatment and when you move to a new set, and after that most people do not notice them much. Everyone is different, so tell your dentist if you have discomfort that does not settle.

What if you do not manage to wear your aligners often enough?

With Invisalign treatment, you are in control of the progress. If you do not manage to wear your aligners for the recommended time, the set you are currently using will need to be worn a little longer before you change to the next one. Regular wear keeps your treatment on track, and we can help if you find it hard to keep to the schedule.

How do you plan and prepare for treatment?

A useful first step is to explain your concerns, timing and treatment goals when you book. Bring relevant medical information and a current list of your medicines. Our team can then assess your teeth, gums, bite and surrounding tissues, request imaging when clinically appropriate, and explain which options are suitable. It helps to ask what the recommended approach is intended to achieve, whether there are reasonable alternatives, and what risks or limitations apply. Fees, treatment time and maintenance vary with the diagnosis and complexity of care, and a written treatment plan can help you compare stages and payment arrangements before you proceed.

What should you do in an emergency?

Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, difficulty breathing or swallowing, serious facial injury or other life-threatening symptoms. Do not wait for a dental appointment in these situations. For severe tooth pain or swelling without these emergency signs, contact your nearest Core Dental practice promptly.

What clear aligners are, in the Department's own description

"Straightening without braces" almost always means clear aligners, and it helps to have the generic clinical description alongside any brand. The state health advice describes them without naming a product, which makes it a useful baseline against which to read any particular system.

The Victorian Department of Health, on clear aligners — which it also calls "invisible braces": "Unlike fixed braces, clear aligners are removable. Treatment involves wearing a series of custom-made clear plastic aligners on the teeth. The aligners are designed to put pressure on certain teeth, which causes the teeth to move. You usually need to wear clear aligners for 20-22 hours a day, but you can take them out to eat, drink and clean them."

Its gapped-teeth page describes the same thing from another angle: clear aligners are "a series of clear pieces of custom-moulded plastic that sit over the teeth and slowly move them".

Four things in that description are worth separating out.

A series, not one appliance. The movement comes from progressing through the series, which is why the schedule is part of the treatment rather than an administrative detail.

Pressure on certain teeth. Each aligner is designed to push specific teeth. That is also why a missed or mis-sequenced aligner is not neutral.

20-22 hours a day. That is the Department's figure, and it leaves two to four hours for everything the aligners come out for.

Out to eat, drink and clean them. All three, in its own list.

And the comparison with fixed braces, which is a trade rather than an upgrade. Fixed braces work by "a constant gentle pressure placed on the teeth" from brackets glued to each tooth and a wire tied to them. Constant, because they cannot be removed. Aligners achieve something similar with removability, and the responsibility for the "constant" part moves to the person wearing them.

What aligners do not change. The Department's risk list covers aligners explicitly alongside braces: "Braces, aligners and retainers make cleaning the teeth more difficult. This increases the chance of gum disease, tooth decay, and stains."

So the hygiene risk is not avoided by choosing the removable option. The Department's standard for anyone in orthodontic treatment is the same: "It is important that teeth are cleaned thoroughly at least two times a day, ideally after every meal", with "a fluoride toothpaste to help protect teeth from tooth decay", and it advises limiting "snacking and sugar-sweetened food and drinks during orthodontic treatment".

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Orthodontic treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 15 December 2025); Teeth - gapped teeth, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 1 July 2025). Both accessed 6 November 2026.

Relapse: the part of treatment that never ends

The thing most likely to undo a result achieved without braces is the same thing that undoes a result achieved with them, and it happens after everyone has stopped paying attention.

The Department lists it as a named risk of orthodontic treatment: "Relapse - Teeth can move once braces are taken off. Retainers should be worn to prevent this from happening."

What a retainer is and the forms it takes. "Retainers are used to retain (hold) the teeth in their new place after treatment is completed. They stop teeth from shifting. They can be attached to the teeth (for example, a wire is glued to the inside surface of the teeth), or removable. Removable retainers are made of either plastic which sits over the teeth like a clear aligner or can be made of acrylic and wire."

A removable retainer looks and feels much like the aligners you have just finished with, which is both convenient and a trap: it is easy to treat the familiar object as optional once the movement has stopped.

And retainers carry the hygiene risk too. They are named in the Department's hygiene risk sentence alongside braces and aligners, so the cleaning standard does not relax when treatment ends.

Which cases suit a removable approach at all is an assessment, not a preference. The Department's diagnostic steps are "a visual examination and photographs", "x-rays of the teeth and jaws", and "impressions or scans of the teeth" — and some problems are not tooth-position problems at all. Palatal expanders and functional appliances work on the jaw and "are used in children when their jaw bones are still growing"; in complex cases, "surgery may be required to remove buried teeth or make it easier for them to erupt into the mouth", and "surgery can also be used to correct some jaw problems". No removable appliance substitutes for either.

What the assessment is supposed to produce. "The orthodontist or dentist will do a thorough examination of your teeth and jaws. They will use x-rays to help look for problems too. After this, they will create a treatment care plan and explain everything to you. Once you are happy with the care plan, treatment can begin." And if it is not clear: "If you are not happy with the care plan or do not understand it, it is important to let your dental practitioner know."

Three practical limits worth knowing before choosing on convenience. First, the Department's honest baseline applies here as anywhere: "Not many people have perfectly straight teeth. Not all crooked teeth require treatment." Second, cost is case-dependent — "costs vary depending on the type of problem and the amount of treatment needed". Third, during treatment the Department asks you to "avoid sticky or hard foods", naming "chewing gum, lollies and crusty bread", and to "avoid high sugar foods and drinks, including fruit juice", because these "can get stuck on braces, aligners and retainers and cause damage".

And one tool it recommends by name. "Interdental brushes are another type of brush. They fit into small spaces around brackets, wires and between teeth. They can be particularly helpful during orthodontic treatment."

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Orthodontic treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 15 December 2025). Accessed 6 November 2026.

Frequently asked questions

Is Invisalign suitable for teenagers?

Teenagers can often be assessed for clear aligners, and Invisalign Teen is offered at our Wyndham practice. Suitability depends on the stage of dental development and the individual, so a consultation will help you find out.

Can I take my aligners out to eat?

Yes. Invisalign aligners are removable, so you take them out to eat and drink and to brush your teeth, then put them back in. They need to be worn around 20 to 22 hours a day for treatment to stay on track.

How long do I wear each set of aligners?

Aligners are typically changed every 7 to 14 days, with each set generally worn for up to two weeks. Your dentist will confirm the schedule for your treatment, because it depends on the complexity of your case.

Will clear aligners be painful?

Aligners may feel a little tight for a day or so at the start and with each new set, but most people find this settles. Tell your dentist if you have ongoing discomfort.

What if I miss wearing my aligners?

If you cannot wear your aligners for the recommended time, the set you are using may need to be worn a little longer before you move to the next. Speak with your dentist if this happens regularly.

How do clear aligners move teeth?

The Victorian Department of Health describes them as "a series of custom-made clear plastic aligners on the teeth", where "the aligners are designed to put pressure on certain teeth, which causes the teeth to move". Its gapped-teeth page calls them "a series of clear pieces of custom-moulded plastic that sit over the teeth and slowly move them".

How long each day do they need to be worn?

"You usually need to wear clear aligners for 20-22 hours a day, but you can take them out to eat, drink and clean them."

Are aligners better for my gums than braces?

Not where cleaning is concerned. The Department's risk sentence names all three: "Braces, aligners and retainers make cleaning the teeth more difficult. This increases the chance of gum disease, tooth decay, and stains."

How should I clean my teeth during treatment?

"It is important that teeth are cleaned thoroughly at least two times a day, ideally after every meal", using "a fluoride toothpaste to help protect teeth from tooth decay". The Department also recommends interdental brushes, which "fit into small spaces around brackets, wires and between teeth" and "can be particularly helpful during orthodontic treatment".

Will my teeth move back afterwards?

They can. "Relapse - Teeth can move once braces are taken off. Retainers should be worn to prevent this from happening." Retainers "are used to retain (hold) the teeth in their new place after treatment is completed. They stop teeth from shifting."

What kinds of retainer are there?

Two. They "can be attached to the teeth (for example, a wire is glued to the inside surface of the teeth), or removable. Removable retainers are made of either plastic which sits over the teeth like a clear aligner or can be made of acrylic and wire."

Can every case be treated without braces?

No. Some problems are not about tooth position. Palatal expanders and functional appliances work on the jaw and "are used in children when their jaw bones are still growing", and in complex cases "surgery may be required to remove buried teeth or make it easier for them to erupt into the mouth".

The Department's position is that "surgery can also be used to correct some jaw problems".

Which foods should I avoid during treatment?

"Avoid sticky or hard foods during orthodontic treatment. These include chewing gum, lollies and crusty bread." Also "avoid high sugar foods and drinks, including fruit juice". The reason is mechanical as well as dental: these "can get stuck on braces, aligners and retainers and cause damage".

How is it decided whether aligners suit me?

By assessment. The Department lists "a visual examination and photographs", "x-rays of the teeth and jaws", and "impressions or scans of the teeth", after which "they will create a treatment care plan and explain everything to you. Once you are happy with the care plan, treatment can begin."

What if the plan does not make sense to me?

Raise it. "If you are not happy with the care plan or do not understand it, it is important to let your dental practitioner know."

Related services and further reading

Orthodontics

Invisalign treatment

Types of Invisalign

Teeth straightening options

The benefits of Invisalign

What is the Invisalign process?

Why are crooked teeth a problem?

How can I stop grinding my teeth?

Risks involved with teeth whitening

How can we help?

If you would like to straighten your teeth without traditional braces, our team can arrange an Invisalign consultation at one of our nine Core Dental practices. Call 13 13 16 or book online. You can also see our Invisalign open days .

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

Interest-free payment plans and HICAPS on-site claiming.

Invisalign Blue Diamond provider (as stated on coredental.com.au).

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online via coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm, Sunday closed

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

Which option lets adults straighten teeth without metal braces?

Clear aligners such as Invisalign are a popular option. They use a series of clear, removable, custom-made aligners. Core Dental dentists assess your teeth and bite first and explain whether aligners or another option suits you.

What material are Invisalign aligners made from?

Invisalign aligners are made of a transparent plastic material and are custom-fitted trays made for your teeth, so they are nearly invisible to others. Core Dental offers Invisalign and can explain how your aligners are planned.

Can clear aligners be taken out for meals?

Yes. Invisalign aligners are removable, so you can take them out to eat, drink and brush your teeth, or for an important event. They then need to go back in, as treatment relies on regular wear.

How many hours a day are Invisalign aligners worn?

Invisalign aligners generally need to be worn for around 20 to 22 hours a day. Your Core Dental dentist confirms the wear time for your treatment plan.

How frequently are aligners swapped during treatment?

Aligners are typically changed every 7 to 14 days depending on the complexity of the case, with each set generally worn for up to two weeks. Your Core Dental dentist or orthodontist advises the schedule for you.

Does everyone qualify for clear aligner treatment?

Not necessarily. Many alignment concerns can be treated with aligners, but suitability is decided after a smile assessment. Core Dental dentists explain if another approach would suit you better, and results vary.

What happens on the first day of aligner treatment?

Your clinician shows you how to put your aligners in and take them out, and gives you instructions on cleaning and care. Core Dental also explains wear time and what to do if an aligner is lost.

How do I book an aligner consultation at Core Dental?

Call 13 13 16 or book online through coredental.com.au. We are open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings. Bring relevant medical information and a list of current medicines to your visit.