Teeth Straightening Options | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/teeth-straightening-options/

Details:

Common teeth straightening options include clear aligners such as Invisalign, conventional metal braces, clear or ceramic braces and lingual braces fitted behind the teeth. At Core Dental we help patients work towards the smile they want, and our dentists and orthodontists can explain which option may suit your teeth, your bite and your lifestyle after an examination. Suitability, treatment time and results vary for each person, so a personal assessment is the first step.

What is Invisalign and how does it work?

Invisalign is an orthodontic treatment that uses a series of clear, removable aligners to straighten teeth. The aligners are custom made from digital scans of your teeth and are worn over the teeth to gently move them into the planned position. Each aligner is typically worn for about two weeks before you change to the next in the series. Core Dental is recognised as an Invisalign Blue Diamond provider, as stated on coredental.com.au. You can read about the Invisalign treatment process and our Invisalign treatment service .

What are the benefits of Invisalign?

People often choose Invisalign for these reasons:

Discreet appearance. The clear plastic aligners are nearly invisible.

Removable design. You can take the aligners out to eat, to brush and floss, and for special occasions. Our article on eating and drinking with Invisalign explains more.

Comfortable fit. The smooth plastic is designed so that it does not irritate the gums, cheeks or tongue.

Mild discomfort. Most people feel only mild discomfort or pressure when they start a new aligner.

You can find more in our article on the benefits of Invisalign .

What is a downside of Invisalign treatment?

Invisalign relies on you wearing the aligners consistently. They generally need to be worn for a minimum of 22 hours a day to work as planned, and treatment can take longer if they are worn for less time than recommended. Our team will talk through whether this commitment suits you, and whether another option might suit you better. Aligner treatment is not suitable for every bite, and your orthodontist or dentist will let you know after your assessment.

What are conventional braces and how do they work?

Conventional, or traditional, braces consist of metal brackets attached to the outside of the teeth, with an archwire running through slots in the brackets. When the wire is tensioned, it gradually moves the teeth into the planned position. Braces are fixed in place, so they work all day without needing you to

remember to wear them, and you will need to take extra care cleaning around the brackets. Our orthodontic braces service page has more detail. Clear or ceramic braces work in the same way but use tooth-coloured brackets.

What are lingual braces?

Lingual braces are attached to the back of the teeth, so they are barely visible to other people. They work in the same way that conventional braces do. Clinicians need additional training to provide lingual braces properly, which is one reason they may cost more than conventional braces. They can be an option for people who need a lot of tooth movement but do not want their braces to be visible. Core Dental offers internal lingual braces , and your orthodontist can tell you whether they suit your teeth.

What teeth straightening options are there for children and teens?

Our dentists can assess children's teeth and bite as they develop, and orthodontic assessment is generally suggested from around age nine or ten. Children's braces and Invisalign options are available, and treatment timing depends on your child's growth and dental development. You can read about children's braces and our children's braces and Invisalign service . Our article on why crooked teeth can be a problem explains why early assessment can be helpful.

How do you find out which option suits you?

Book an appointment with one of our dentists or orthodontists to find out which teeth straightening treatment may suit you. An assessment usually includes an examination of your teeth, gums and bite, and may include imaging. We will explain the options, the likely stages and appointments, what is involved in aftercare such as retainers, and the costs, which we quote before treatment starts. Our team can also explain Invisalign fees and interest-free payment plans.

How can you plan your care and make an informed decision?

A useful first step is to tell us about your concern, symptoms, timing and goals when you book. Bring relevant medical information and a list of your current medicines. Our team can then assess your teeth, gums, bite and surrounding tissues, request imaging where it is clinically appropriate, and explain which options suit you.

Ask what the recommended approach is intended to achieve, whether there are reasonable alternatives, what preparation and aftercare involve, and what risks or limitations apply. Treatment time, fees, recovery and maintenance vary with the diagnosis and the complexity of care. At Core Dental we quote before treatment starts, and a written treatment plan can help you compare stages, expected appointments and payment arrangements before you proceed.

Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, breathing or swallowing difficulty, 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 dental practice promptly. For routine care, prevention and review intervals should be tailored to your individual oral health risks rather than assumed to be the same for everyone.

How can we help?

If you are thinking about straightening your teeth, our team can help at any of our nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne. Learn more about orthodontics at Core Dental , call 13 13 16, or book online.

The full published list of devices, not just the two famous ones

The choice is usually presented as braces or clear aligners. The state health advice lists seven kinds of orthodontic device, and several of them do jobs the famous two cannot.

The Victorian Department of Health: "A range of orthodontic devices may be used to move teeth, or to keep them in place."

Palatal expanders and functional appliances. "Palatal expanders can widen the upper jaw. Functional appliances are used to correct bite problems. These are used in children when their jaw bones are still growing."

That last sentence is the whole reason timing matters. These change the jaw rather than the teeth, and the window is while the bones are still growing. Orthodontics Australia puts the same point plainly: "Early orthodontic treatment begins while your child's jawbones are still soft. They do not harden until children reach their late teens."

Fixed braces. "Small metal or ceramic brackets are attached (glued) to the front or back of each tooth, and a wire is tied to them. When the wires are tied into the brackets there is a constant gentle pressure placed on the teeth, causing the teeth to move."

Note "the front or back of each tooth" — braces on the inner surface are a variation of fixed braces rather than a separate technology.

Clear aligners. "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."

Elastics. Small rubber bands, which the Department says "can be stretched and placed onto the braces to provide extra force to move teeth. They are usually attached between upper and lower braces and can help with correcting the bite." Worth knowing because they depend entirely on the wearer — they are removable in practice, whatever the braces are.

Retainers. "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."

Surgery. "In complex cases, surgery may be required to remove buried teeth or make it easier for them to erupt into the mouth. Surgery can also be used to correct some jaw problems."

And for gaps specifically, restorative options exist alongside the appliances. The Department's gapped-teeth page lists composite fillings, where tooth-coloured material "can be added onto a tooth with a bonding agent to help fill the gap"; veneers, where "if the gap is small, veneers that are just a little bit wider than the natural teeth could be used to cover the gap"; crowns; bridges; implants; a removable plate, which "helps to move the teeth closer together"; braces; clear aligners; and a fraenectomy — "surgery to remove the fraenum that has caused the gap", which "is usually done before the gap is closed by 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); Orthodontics Australia (Australian Society of Orthodontists), When to see an Orthodontist, orthodonticsaustralia.org.au . All accessed 6 November 2026.

How the option gets chosen, and what you are entitled to ask

The device matters less than the process that selects it. The published description of that process includes a step most people do not know they are allowed to use.

Who provides treatment. "Orthodontic treatment is provided by an orthodontist, and some dentists. An orthodontist is a specialist dentist who has done extra study in this area. They can detect, prevent and manage the problems caused when teeth are not straight or when jaws don't bite together properly."

On the training behind that, Orthodontics Australia states: orthodontists "begin as dentists before completing an additional three years of full-time study to become registered specialists." Three years on top of a dental degree. The Dental Board of Australia lists orthodontics among the "13 dental specialties in Australia which are approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council", and notes that Ahpra's public register "includes details of the specialty or specialties for dentists who hold specialist registration" — so the claim is checkable.

The sequence. "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."

Once you are happy with the care plan. Treatment follows your agreement, not the examination.

And then the sentence worth remembering: "If you are not happy with the care plan or do not understand it, it is important to let your dental practitioner know."

That is an instruction from the state health authority to say so. Not understanding the plan is a reason to pause, and raising it is expected rather than awkward.

On cost, the published position is deliberately unspecific , and that is useful to know before comparing quotes: "Costs vary depending on the type of problem and the amount of treatment needed. Ask your dental practitioner for advice." Any figure you see advertised is for a case, not for a treatment type.

Three risks that belong in the comparison. The Department lists them for orthodontic treatment generally, which means they apply whichever device is chosen:

"Dental hygiene problems - Braces, aligners and retainers make cleaning the teeth more difficult. This increases the chance of gum disease, tooth decay, and stains."

"Soft tissue injury - Braces (brackets and wires) can be sharp and poke the gums, cheeks, lips or tongue. Sharp areas can be covered by special orthodontic wax to prevent injury."

"Relapse - Teeth can move once braces are taken off. Retainers should be worn to prevent this from happening."

Note that the hygiene risk is attributed to braces, aligners and retainers — removable does not mean risk-free. The Department's response is specific: "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", and it suggests limiting "snacking and sugar-sweetened food and drinks during orthodontic treatment".

And relapse is the one that outlasts the treatment. Retainers are not an optional extra at the end; they are what stops the result undoing itself. The Department adds that "your dental practitioner will discuss these and other risks with you" — which is another thing to hold them to.

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Orthodontic treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 15 December 2025); Orthodontics Australia (Australian Society of Orthodontists), When to see an Orthodontist, orthodonticsaustralia.org.au ; Dental Board of Australia, Specialist Registration, dentalboard.gov.au (the page states it was reviewed 18/03/2025). All accessed 6 November 2026.

Frequently asked questions

Should I choose Invisalign or braces?

Neither option suits everyone. Invisalign aligners are removable and discreet but rely on consistent wear, while fixed braces work all day. Your dentist or orthodontist will recommend an option after examining you.

How long are Invisalign aligners worn each day?

Aligners generally need to be worn for a minimum of 22 hours a day, and each aligner is typically worn for about two weeks. Wearing them for less time may extend treatment.

Can I eat with Invisalign?

You take the aligners out to eat and drink anything other than water, then clean your teeth before putting them back in. Your orthodontist will give you specific instructions.

Are lingual braces visible?

Lingual braces are attached to the back of the teeth, so they are barely visible to others. They may suit people who want fixed braces without visible brackets, and your orthodontist can advise if they suit your teeth.

Will straightening my teeth hurt?

Most people feel only mild discomfort or pressure when starting a new aligner, and fixed braces can feel sore after adjustments. Tell us if you are uncomfortable and we can advise.

What orthodontic devices exist besides braces and clear aligners?

The Victorian Department of Health lists palatal expanders, which "can widen the upper jaw"; functional appliances, "used to correct bite problems"; fixed braces; clear aligners; elastics; retainers; and surgery: "In complex cases, surgery may be required to remove buried teeth or make it easier for them to erupt into the mouth."

Why are some appliances only for children?

Because they work on the jaw while it is still growing. Palatal expanders and functional appliances "are used in children when their jaw bones are still growing". Orthodontics Australia puts it the same way: "Early orthodontic treatment begins while your child's jawbones are still soft. They do not harden until children reach their late teens."

How do fixed braces move teeth?

"Small metal or ceramic brackets are attached (glued) to the front or back of each tooth, and a wire is tied to them. When the wires are tied into the brackets there is a constant gentle pressure placed on the teeth, causing the teeth to move."

How many hours a day are clear aligners 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."

What are elastics for?

They "can be stretched and placed onto the braces to provide extra force to move teeth. They are usually attached between upper and lower braces and can help with correcting the bite."

Will I need a retainer afterwards?

The published advice treats it as the thing that protects the result. "Relapse - Teeth can move once braces are taken off. Retainers should be worn to prevent this from happening." Retainers "can be attached to the teeth (for example, a wire is glued to the inside surface of the teeth), or removable".

Are clear aligners easier on my teeth than braces?

Not where hygiene is concerned. The Department attributes the hygiene risk to all of them: "Braces, aligners and retainers make cleaning the teeth more difficult. This increases the chance of gum disease, tooth decay, and stains." Its response is to clean "thoroughly at least two times a day, ideally after every meal".

Who can provide orthodontic treatment?

"Orthodontic treatment is provided by an orthodontist, and some dentists. An orthodontist is a specialist dentist who has done extra study in this area." Orthodontics Australia states that orthodontists "begin as dentists before completing an additional three years of full-time study to become registered specialists", and Ahpra's public register "includes details of the specialty or specialties for dentists who hold specialist registration".

What if I do not understand the treatment plan I am given?

Say so — the Department's advice is explicit: "If you are not happy with the care plan or do not understand it, it is important to let your dental practitioner know." Treatment follows your agreement: "Once you are happy with the care plan, treatment can begin."

Why can nobody quote me a price up front?

Because the published position is that it depends on the case: "Costs vary depending on the type of problem and the amount of treatment needed. Ask your dental practitioner for advice."

What are the risks I should be told about?

Three, which the Department applies to orthodontic treatment generally: hygiene problems; soft tissue injury, where brackets and wires "can be sharp and poke the gums, cheeks, lips or tongue" and "sharp areas can be covered by special orthodontic wax"; and relapse. It adds that "your dental practitioner will discuss these and other risks with you".

Related services and further reading

Orthodontics

Invisalign treatment

Orthodontic braces

Internal lingual braces

Children's braces and Invisalign

Straighten teeth without braces

Benefits of Invisalign

What is the Invisalign process?

Specialist orthodontist

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.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside 8.30am to 1.30pm), Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside , Glenferrie

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.

What are the main ways to straighten teeth?

Common options are Invisalign clear aligners, conventional metal braces, clear or ceramic braces and lingual braces behind the teeth. Core Dental dentists and orthodontists assess you first to explain which may suit your teeth.

How does Invisalign straighten teeth?

Invisalign uses a series of custom-made clear removable aligners, made from digital scans of your teeth, that gradually move teeth into the planned position. Each aligner is typically worn for about two weeks before the next one.

How many hours a day must Invisalign be worn?

Invisalign aligners generally need to be worn for at least 22 hours a day. Wearing them for less time may extend treatment. Our Core Dental team explains the commitment before you start.

Why do people choose Invisalign aligners?

Invisalign aligners are nearly invisible, removable for eating and brushing, made of smooth plastic and usually cause only mild discomfort when a new aligner starts. Core Dental can assess whether they suit you.

How do conventional braces work?

Conventional braces use metal brackets on the outside of the teeth joined by an archwire. When the wire is tensioned it gradually moves the teeth. Clear or ceramic braces use tooth-coloured brackets.

Does Core Dental offer lingual braces?

Core Dental offers internal lingual braces, which sit on the back of the teeth and are barely visible. Our orthodontists will advise whether they suit your teeth and how much movement you need.

Is Core Dental an Invisalign provider?

Yes. Core Dental is recognised as an Invisalign Blue Diamond provider, as stated on coredental.com.au. Our dentists and orthodontists can explain whether Invisalign suits your teeth.

How can I book a straightening consultation at Core Dental?

Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 or book online through coredental.com.au. We have nine Melbourne clinics, open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.