

Treatment With Clear Aligners

Please read and follow the following instructions to be sure your smile is beautiful!

The doctor has created a 3D computer plan to move your teeth. This plan was used to create your aligners. The number of aligners varies from patient to patient. We will label and number the aligners in order for you. Please review the following important information:

INTERVAL: Each aligner is to be worn for a specific total number of days / hours. We call this the “interval of wear.” The doctor will assign the number of days for each aligner set based on the idea that you will wear the aligners 22 hours each day. Think about total hours per aligner rather than just total days. For example, if your interval is 14 days, you should have each aligner in place for 308 hours. If you miss more than 2 hours a day, you will need to add those additional hours of wear to each aligner before moving on to the next aligner. If aligners are worn for less than the prescribed amount of time, teeth may not move as intended and the next aligner may not fit.

ATTACHMENTS: You may have what are called “attachments” bonded to some of your teeth as part of your treatment plan. It is very important that you check daily to confirm that all attachments are still present. If you ever see that one of the attachments is no longer present or is damaged, please contact the office for a repair. When attachments are required they are critical to controlling the teeth properly to get the desired result and finish as quickly as possible.

TRACKING: We use the term “tracking” to refer to how well each aligner fits during treatment. When you first start wearing an aligner the fit will be tight and after several days it will begin to feel neutral (however, teeth are still moving). An aligner that is tracking well has an intimate fit around all the teeth and attachments, with no visible gaps between the aligner material and the teeth/attachments. It is important that you check the fit of each aligner before moving to the next. If you notice that an aligner is not tracking well on a tooth or an attachment, please stay in that aligner for an additional day or two. We will check tracking at each appt but it is also up to you to be sure your teeth are tracking well. If anything is ever not tracking even after staying in an aligner for extra time, please call the office.

PROPER INSERTION & REMOVAL TECHNIQUE FOR YOUR ALIGNERS: In general it will take a few days to get used to inserting and removing your aligners. At first it may feel awkward, however, with practice it will become easy. Each set may go into your mouth a little differently than the previous set. Take your time to slowly fit the aligners and remove the aligners. Some aligners for example may fit more easily or may be removed more easily if you use a right to left pattern, or a left to right pattern. There is no one right way, as each aligner is unique. The main point is to avoid bending the aligners in a way that may warp or distort them during insertion and removal. Avoid using your teeth to bite the aligners into place, as damage is likely to occur. Our expert team will also help train you on the best techniques at the beginning of your treatment.

IMPORTANT: Keep each previous finished aligner after completing it and store it in the bag it came out of.

LOST ALIGNERS & WHAT TO DO: If an aligner is ever lost or broken, call the office. Go back to wearing the aligner that is the immediately previous aligner(s). For example, you lose #4, begin wearing #3 until we instruct you on what to do next. We may advise that a replacement aligner be fabricated to take the place of the lost or broken aligner. The fee for a new aligner is approximately **\$25 per aligner**.

Wear and Care of Aligners

- **PROPER CLEANING:** Rinse your aligner under cool water daily. Clean the inside and outside of your aligner with a tooth brush once daily. We recommend using liquid hand / dish soap. Aligners that build up mineral deposits may cause a problem with the aligner fit. Using foam aligner cleaner to remove stains is permitted provided it is used only once per week.
- **DO NOT USE THESE ALIGNER CLEANING TECHNIQUES:** Avoid the following: 1) HOT / BOILING water. 2) The dishwasher. 3) The microwave. These will all result in deforming / warping the material, causing the aligner to be ruined. Also, DO NOT use toothpaste to clean your aligner, as the abrasive ingredients in toothpaste will dull / scratch the aligner material and create a cloudy appearance.
- **DO NOT** store your aligners in a hot place (car, attic, etc.).
- If there is a sharp edge on your aligner that irritates your tongue or your gums, carefully use an emery board (nail file) to smooth the area.
- Store your aligners in your case whenever they are not in your mouth. **NEVER** wrap your aligners in a napkin while eating – this is the number one way aligners are lost. **NEVER** put your aligner in your pocket – this is how aligners are often broken. **NEVER** leave your aligners or the storage case in reach of your pets. Dogs love the smell of saliva and will chew on aligners.

FOOD & DRINK: Dietary restrictions are not as significant as with braces. In general, we recommend being careful with sticky, chewy and crunchy foods, as these may potentially damage attachments. We recommend brushing and flossing after every meal or snack prior to replacing your aligners. As far as drinking goes, it's a great idea to remove your clear aligners and store them in their protective case before drinking. There are multiple reasons to do so. Some beverages, such as red wine or coffee, can stain your aligners. Others, such as soda or energy drinks, could lead to a buildup of acid beneath your clear aligners, causing tooth decay and permanent damage to your enamel. Additionally, if the beverage is hot (think coffee or tea), the heat can warp your aligners. Taking out your clear aligners allows you to enjoy your favorite drink. However, it's important to wear clear aligners for about 22 hours per day. Be sure to replace your aligners as soon as possible after drinking. Before replacing your aligners, it is important to swish with water and floss if you are able. With carbonated sodas do not brush your teeth until 30 minutes after drinking, as this damages tooth enamel.

Thank you for trusting us with your smile!