

EXPERT Advice

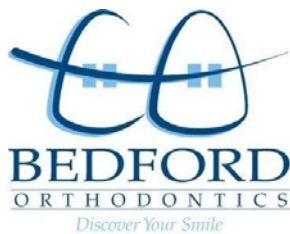
Invisalign



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More and more people, adults and teens alike, are seeking discrete options to straighten teeth and fix their bites. Invisalign started to gain popularity approximately 6-7 years ago. At that time, it was a great orthodontic treatment option to address minor rotations of teeth and minor bite discrepancies. It has advanced significantly in the last few years and is now at the forefront of orthodontic technology. Invisalign can now be used to treat most complicated alignment issues. So how does it work, you may ask.

At our office, the initial appointment is a complimentary consultation visit. We examine the alignment of the teeth and the "bite" (how the teeth come together) carefully. It is very important for us to ensure that Invisalign will work perfectly for you. Once you are deemed to be a good candidate for Invisalign treatment, a set of diagnostic records is obtained. This includes an x-ray of your teeth and your jaw bone. We will also scan your teeth and bite using the iTero scanner - one of the newest technologies in orthodontics. Instead of impressions or molds of the teeth, the scan is a composite of thousands of photos of teeth that are stitched together. This composite is then emailed to Invisalign. The technicians at the Align Institute then reconstruct the composite into a three dimensional model that allows me, your orthodontist, to execute tooth movements.

Based on these movements and the desired final positions of the teeth, a series

of aligners is fabricated. The number of aligners vary depending on how complicated the bite is and how crowded (or spaced) the teeth are. A "Clincheck" is the virtual set up that allows us to show you how the teeth move in a video clip over time. Each aligner is usually worn full time for approximately 2 weeks, and then you would change to the next consecutive aligner. To help our patients remember to wear their aligners full time, indicator tabs can be used. These will show if the aligners are worn as prescribed by the orthodontist. Sometimes, parents are concerned that their teen(s) would not wear their aligners full time. However, in our practice, a large portion of our patients are teens and young adults and we are happy to say that compliance with the aligners tends to be very good. If you are concerned that your teen may not be a very compliant patient - talk to us, we may be able to help them be responsible with their aligners.

Each aligner has specific tooth movements build into it. It will exert pressure on the teeth that are programmed to move in that aligner. It is with this gentle pressure that aligners move the teeth. This is how teeth move inside the aligners. It is actually the same principle that is used in the more conventional braces that are attached to the teeth. However, in contrast to fixed braces, the aligners can be removed for meals and for cleaning. Treatment time in Invisalign is usually exactly the same as in conventional braces and the results are identical.